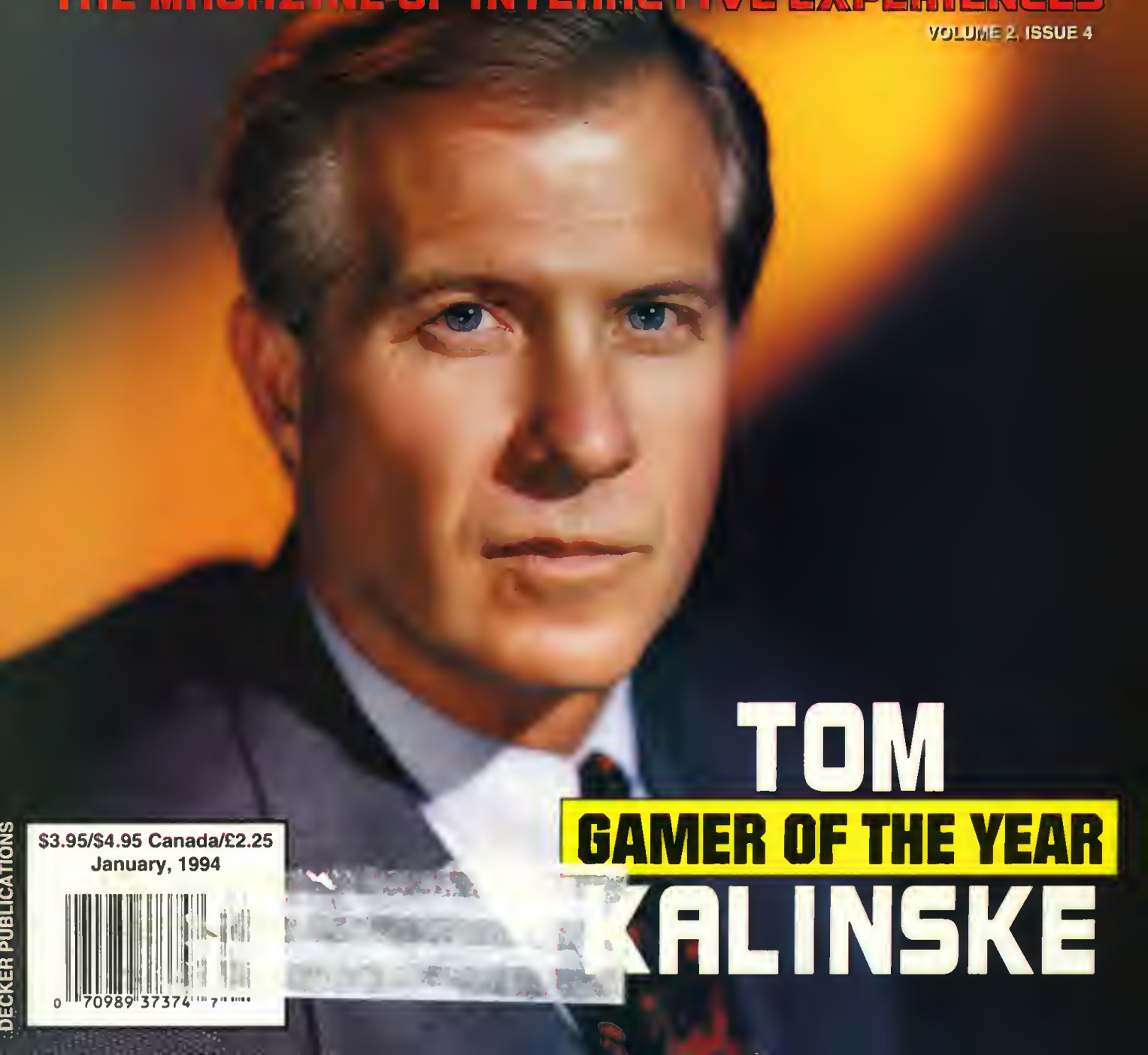
INSIDE MORTAL KOMBAT 2 · BUBSY BOBCAT RETURNS

ELECTRONIC GAMES

THE MAGAZINE OF INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4



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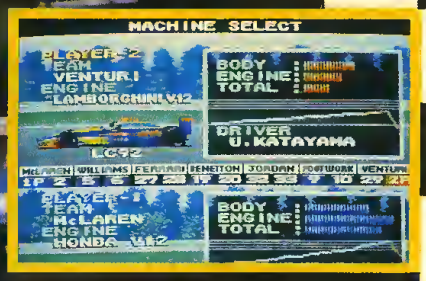

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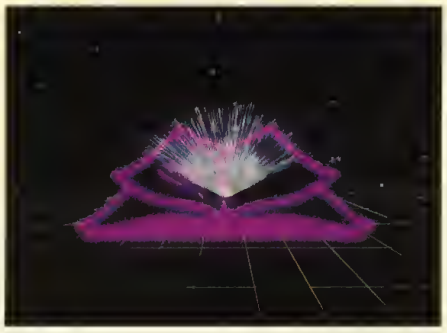

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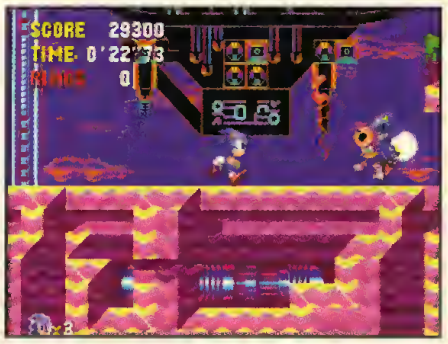
EG's Gamer of the Year — Tom Kalinske.



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About the art— We at EG would like to thank the following artists for their contributions to this issue:
The portrait of Tom Kalinske was photographed by Mark Vieira of the Starlight Studio — Cover
Eric Curry — All department logos, and various photography
Jon Ellis — Treasures of the Deep
Cliff Spohn — EG Interview
Don Wieland — Electronic Chess
Bill Venn — Video and Computer Football

Okay, it is once again time for the gift giving season, and as I write this on November 16th, I realize that I have not only *not* started my shopping, but also that I have no idea *when* I will start said shopping. So I hereby dedicate this space to everyone out there who doesn't get their shopping done until Christmas Eve, and occasionally get stuck buying things like plaid ties because what you really wanted was sold out. I understand. You're not alone.

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POWER ON!

A Community of Interest

As 1994 begins, things have never looked brighter for electronic gamers. High-potential new hardware has electrified the retail market, and software for all major platforms rewrites the meaning of "state-of-the-art" every month.

Electronic gaming is inching toward the public respect and recognition it deserves as a worthwhile hobby. The stereotyped vidiot zombies are too funny to disappear entirely, but the negative images are now balanced by more positive ones. Gaming is as stimulating and entertaining as any other pastime. People are re-thinking the way they perceive us, which means fewer stupid comments about "time-wasting video games."

Unfortunately, there's something that threatens this progress. I'm talking about the tendency, especially in younger players, to ridicule those whose taste in games differs from their own. The only way electronic gaming can become a true hobby is for all gamers to acknowledge that the community of interest we share is stronger, more important, than the way we express it.

Most gamers like cartridges best. Sales figures prove that. Some would rather get their interactive experience through a computer, black box multimedia system, or hand-size machine. Comments I've heard and read make those gamers sound like traitors to some Great Cause.

That's ridiculous! Each type of gaming offers a different range of software, but the basic principle stays the same. In many cases, the same game is available, with only trivial changes, on many different platforms.

Our surveys show that more than half of **EG**'s readers love interactive entertainment in its many forms. These megagamers have realized something that gamers everywhere must understand: computer, video, portable, coin-op and multimedia games are all aspects of the same hobby.

You'd never hear a stamp collector revile another philatelist because he or she collects flower stamps instead of flag stamps. Gamers should adopt this same tolerant attitude. Those who like another form of electronic gaming are guilty of nothing more heinous than, in effect, liking strawberry better than vanilla ice cream.

Another divisive factor is the strange compulsion some feel to root for one company over another. There's nothing wrong with liking the Genesis better than the SNES or vice versa, but don't turn it into a holy war.

This is no zero-sum game. People win or lose individual contests, but in the long run, everyone wins in electronic gaming. It's a terrific way to spend leisure time.

By preserving the widest possible selection of interactive experiences, we make it possible for everyone to enjoy the hobby that gives us so much pleasure. To work the ice cream analogy harder, that's why supermarkets stock more than one flavor and carry tubs, bricks, cones, pops, cups and other presentations.

Can you imagine getting in someone's face because they like ice cream on a stick? Misguided gamers do that all the time.

As the industry prepares to gather here in Las Vegas for the winter Consumer Electronics Show, it is time for us at **EG** to rededicate ourselves to serving *the entire* electronic gaming hobby, not just part of it. We'd like to think that this broad editorial horizon is one of the things that makes this magazine special. We hope you agree.

And in the spirit of the holiday season, the **EG** family extends best wishes for many wonderful experiences in the future. In 1994, let us hope that the only violence will be on the gaming screen.

— Arnie Katz

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PUBLISHER
Steve Harris
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Arnie Katz
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Bill Kunkel
NEWS EDITOR
Joyce Worley
SENIOR EDITOR
Marc Camron
MANAGING EDITOR
Ross Chamberlain
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Russ Ceccola, Ed Dille, Tim Ostermiller
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Jay Carter Ted Chapman, Al Giovetti John Hardin, Steve Honeywell Kevin Perry Will Richardson, Sara Slaymaker Mike Stokes, Scott Wolf Laurie Yates
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Juli McMeekin
PRODUCTION
Colleen Bastien, Production Manager
Dean Hager Production Assistant
Jennifer Whitesides, Managing Copy Editor
Jo-El M. Damen Gayle Schneider Copy Editors
John Stockhausen Ad Coordinator
CUSTOMER SERVICE
(515 280-3861
ADVERTISING
Eisenberg Communications Group
(310) 824-S297
Jeffrey Eisenberg, National Advertising Director
Brian Olshever, Account Executive
Suzanne Farrell, Ad Coordination Manager
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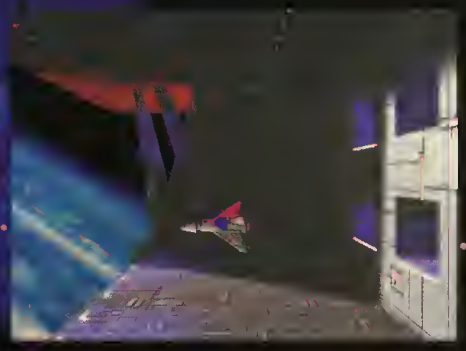

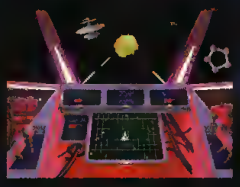

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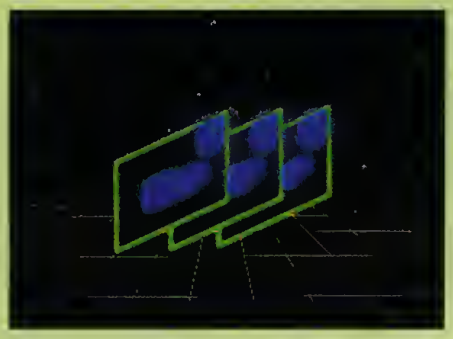

FEEDBACK

Letters From Our Readers

Hot Topic

Censorship, with Sega's recent implementation of its rating system, sure has been a hot topic lately. I've read many an article on the subject in several fanzines, but all have been rather ignorant and selfish. I was beginning to lose faith in our literary-type game players—until I read your editorial in the October issue.

Bravo to you for actually considering different sides of the issue. While most people whine and complain about things being censored, they forget that some are genuinely offended by the material. Therefore, as you pointed out, a ratings system (which is *not* the same as censorship) is a good idea; it provides a guide for purchasers to choose a product they will be happy with.

What it all boils down to is that you can't offend nobody, no matter what you do. Blood will offend some people, and censoring blood will offend some. A rating system ... sure beats every separate interest in gaming duking it out to have all games tailored to their own personal interests. Thank you, Sega.

Noah Dziobecki
Long Beach, CA

Thanks, Noah. By the time you see this we trust you will have read our in-depth look at the censorship/ratings issue in our December edition. As this number goes to press, the flurry of concern in the media on the release of ***Mortal Kombat*** *has retired in favor of other pressing stories, but the issue remains... now, we expect, in responsible hands—and cooler heads—within the industry.*

On Mature Reflection

After your editorial in the Sept. issue, I felt compelled to write. Older gamers (at least, anyone past 20) have to get together and make the game companies realize that we exist. There are so many good games out there that are being overshadowed by **Street Fighter II** (and clones) and "Mario" type games. If we ever want Sega or Nintendo to change, we have to convince them. Thank you, Mr. Katz, for taking that first step.

For what seems like an eternity, I've been saying the same thing to people, over and over: electronic games are not just for kids! True, games like **SFII** and **Mortal Kombat** help make skeptics even more skeptical, but one look at **7th Guest**, **Slipheed VR** and **Star Control** are proof that many gamers, like me, are well past adolescence.

Kellin Winslow
Waukesha, WI

You may have noticed that you are not alone, Kellin, if you've been reading this department in the last couple of issues. Yours and the previous eloquent letters are representative of many more we don't have room to print. But we also have a healthy response from those who dig the fighting and Mario games—not all of whom are under 20, believe it or not!

What Price Gaming?

I have just begun reading your magazine and I am impressed, but I have a suggestion. I would like to know if you could add the price of the game with the other information in the box at the beginning of the article.

Also, I have heard about the Sega Channel, and I was wondering if there were plans for a channel for the NES or the SNES.

James Gonzales
Denver, CO

We decided early on not to include the prices on games in reviews, James, because they frequently differ depending on where the game is purchased.

As to game channels, Nintendo of America has not yet announced plans for one on this side of the Pacific. There were rumors a few months ago of the parent company mulling over plans for something of the sort in Japan, but nothing is set in stone.

To Be Eggzact

This time around I figured I'd correct the Game Doctor's response to William Simpson's letter (Oct. **EG**), which was a correction to an item in the July issue. To set the record straight, it was indeed Warren Robinett who programmed the first Easter Egg, in **Adventure**. Howard Scott Warshaw programmed **Yar's Revenge** (which featured the message "HSWWSH"), **ET** ("HSW" and other odd things) and **Raiders of the Lost Ark** (a full signature? I haven't seen it). **Pac-Man** was the work of Todd Fry and, to the best of my knowledge, did not feature an Easter Egg.

Russ Perry, Jr.
Omro, WI

Thanks for the further clarification, Russ. Anyone else out there have the word on a ***Raiders*** *Easter Egg, or any others of the Atari epoch?*

Atari and IBM

In a few short weeks the Jaguar 64-Bit for Atari will debut in select areas. I think many gamers are eager to see it succeed because, unlike the 3DO and CD-I, Atari knows games *and* gamers. With IBM in their corner and a CD add-on slated for 1994, I'm hoping that the powers that be will start porting over some of the great games and RPGs available for the IBM-PC. Can you tell me if IBM plans to do this?

Dan Johanson
Des Moines, Iowa

While a division of IBM, Application Solutions, manufactures the Jaguar units, few games are created by IBM—as of yet. Big Blue's EduQuest division only recently began to produce non-educationally oriented game software (see Hotline, June ***EG****). Atari will have to deal directly with the many publishers of games for the PC and MS-DOS systems.*

But by now you'll have seen our forecast and the promising lineup for the Jag in the November ***EG****.*

Let's keep the dialogue flowing. Send your letters to:

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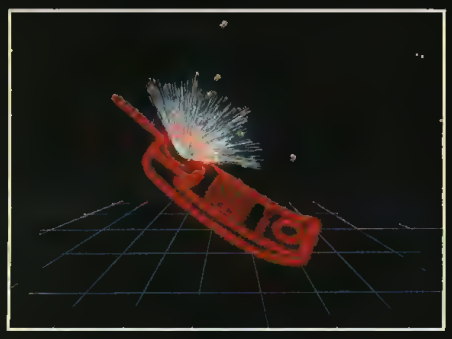


EG HOTLINE

Compiled by Joyce Worley & Ross Chamberlain

Mortal Kombat Goes to Movie

Soon we ll be seeing the **Mortal Kombat** characters n a ine of merchandise thanks to deals between Midway Manufacturing, producer Larry Kasanoff and Danny Simon s The Licensing Group to market products based on Midway's arcade game

New Line Cinema (the folks who made the TMNT movie began work on *Mortal Kombat: The Movie* (working title Producer Larry Kasanoff explained that the movie " is not a story about a game but rather about the fantastic **Mortal Kombat** characters. These characters are fantastic and wi translate wonderfully to film and television m thri led to be involved with .such a terrific project."

Kasanoff went on to say that the characters will also show up in other media such as toys television and a fu l-blown merchandising ine to include lunch boxes T-shirts, toys and many other products

Absolute Gets Extreme

Absolute agreed to acquire Extreme Entertainment in an exchange involving cash notes and stock shares total ng around $2.5 mi ion Through the agreement, Absolute acquires Extreme s 12-game ne of N ntendo and Sega software products, including three to be published for Sega CD

Extreme wil continue operations n San Mateo CA, as a separate label and plans to publish 10 or 15 exciting new products n 1994. The company is headed up by the experienced long-time video gam ng veteran Dennis Thorley

Sonic Sails Over Macy's

Sonic the Hedgehog took it uncharacteristically slow heading down Broadway as the first balloon based on a video game character to join n Macy's annual Thanksgiving Day Parade

The six-story Sega star celebrity was welcomed by Jean McFaddin producer director of Macy's Annual Events "We re thrilled to have Sonic joining us n this year's parade " she said. "With his feisty attitude Sonic is certainly one of the most anticipated balloons in this year's ineup."

Aztech Upgrade Adds CD-ROM

Aztech Labs developed an add-on product, the Sound Galaxy Double Speed PRO 16 Multimedia Upgrade Kit, to upgrade PCs It features a double-speed CD-ROM drive 16 Bit sound card over 20 software programs including voice recognition software with a CD-ROM carrying case for $599 There s also a microphone stereo speakers and Windows 3.1 drivers

Games in the package are Sierra s **Jones In The Fast Lane**, **Space Quest IV** and Interplay's **Battle Chess Enhanced CD-ROM.** The Software Toolworks **Encyclopedia**, which contains a plethora of information at your fingertips, and numerous other usefu programs are included

Sunsoft Denies Cheat-Proofing

Sunsoft issued a statement denying reports that they cheat-proofed their games, specifically **Taz-Mania** to prevent its operation with Game Genie and Game Action Replay. David Siller, Director of Sunsoft's product development, was unequivocable when he stated, "Sunsoft has not made any effort, and will not in the future, to purposely cheat-proof games to not function on these devices."

In other news, Sunsoft announced the February release of **The Pirates of Dark Water**, for SNES and Genesis. The SNES version is a two-player, eight level search for treasures with different types of play on every level, such as walking, hand-to-hand combat, flying and shooting, as the characters use swords, magic, daggers and martial arts to conquer the obstacles. The Genesis version is a one-player fighting platform contest.

The Pirates of Dark Water delivers high seas action.

Sunsoft also announced acquisition of the *Kung Fu* TV series license from Warner Bros., and will market **Kung Fu: The Legend Continues** game for Genesis and SNES in May. The Genesis version has 12 levels as well as cinematic sequences, and the SNES version adds a bonus level. Both fighting games will have strong story lines, as the hero priest and his policeman son battle crime.

More Stars Light Up Games

More famous folk are showing up in Sega games. Sega s CD game **Double Switch** was directed by Mary *(Pet Sematery II)* Lambert, and stars Corey Haim Deborah Harry and genre stalwart Dick Miller with a score by Thomas Dolby

Double Switch, for Sega CD, uses high-quality production.

There s lots of talent behind the scenes too Ron Stein who staged the boxing scenes n *Raging Bull* and one of the *Rocky* flicks, is the choreographer in **Prize Fighter.**

Malibu Heroes Invade CD-ROM

The adventures of Prime Hardcase and Freex from Malibu Comics Ultraverse series are now enhanced by high-resolution graphics and graphics effects original music and character voices on a line of MPC format CD-ROMs from Davidson & Associates. Retailing at $24.95, the first three

CD-ROMIX! titles **Prime #1**, **Hard Case #1** and **Freex #1**, also include a beh nd-the-scenes look at the making of the software

Davidson's president and CEO Bob Davidson said the titles "offer readers a way to experience their favorite comic stories " Scott Rosenberg, Malibu president and CEO said "Leading-edge, high-quality audio and video technologies will result in first-rate CD-ROM versions of our comics "

Nintendo Revamps NES

The 8-Bit Nintendo Entertainment System has a facelift. The new configuration is about half the size of the original NES in a dark grey control deck, and comes with one controller and the RF cable. Dubbed the NES Basic, it retails for $49 95

The new configuration has games loaded nto the top, rather than the front, of the deck, and the redesigned controller has a larger directional key and angled bottom.

Street Fighter II Video Tips on Tape

Strategies, tips and instruction for playing **Street Fighter II Turbo** (SNES) and **Street Fighter II Special Champion Edition** Genesis) are described by top player Tomonari Ohira in a 45-minute video called *Street Fighter I Strategy Video*. The $19 95 video from Capcom USA and Creative Productions also includes glimpses of **Super Street Fighter II** and its new characters

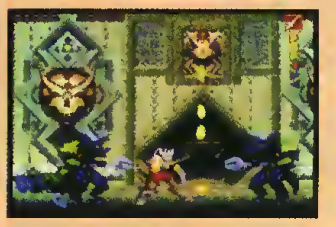
System Enhances Game Animation

Electric Image announced the addition of new features such as sound and SG compatibility to version 2 0 of the ElectricImage An mation System a Macintosh production tool widely used by fi m, TV and game professionals The new version also enables better sync-sound animation, provides plug-ins to make models add an mation behaviors create special effects etc ; permits deformations such as twist, taper bend, ripple and stretch; provides Summation texture mapping; Bezier Spline Motion Paths Anti-Aliasing, and many other features that result in better graphics.

The ElectricImage system was used n several notable games such as Spectrum Holobyte's **Iron Helix**, Warner's **HellCab** reviewed this issue and sti in development) Presto Studio s **Journeyman,** and Jim Ludtke s **Freak Show** (Voyager/CD-ROM)

Comicbook Action Inspires Accolade Duo

Accolade is working on **Fireteam Rogue**, a comic book-inspired blend of arcade action, strategy and role-playing in the galactic Spiral Arm, a collection of planetary systems housing everything from intelligent dinosaurs to standard-issue humanoids. Fireteam Rogue itself consists of Chance, a young, male humanoid; Zeut, a crystalline life form; Aja, an elf-like babe with psychic abilities; Shadowblade, a Saikaran cat-monkey whose heightened senses make him the ideal ninja; and Broc, the saurian strongman of the squad. The balance among the strategic, role-playing, and action elements will be determined by the plat-



form, with the video games having a higher action content while the computer version will require more skull work. **Fireteam Rogue** is scheduled for release next spring.

Accolade's fighting game, **Matrix Prime** has some interesting and original elements going for it. It's based on a future scientific breakthrough which allows humans to be scanned for the so-called "Darwin Gene", a recessive gene found in maybe one person in 100,000 which, if stimulated, produces

"benevolent mutation." In other words, they've got a superhero serum. It doesn't take long before a team of super beings is assembled; then it's only a matter of time before the DG serum falls into the "wrong" hands and team evil is completed.

The actual combat moves were captured from filmed performances by real martial artists. Then, the character movements were laboriously transformed into the comic book-style images seen in the game. Accolade's John Skeel promises that **MP** will feature multiple-screen combat that seems much more like the kind of tear-up-the-city battles Marvel and DC super types have been waging for decades.

OUCH!

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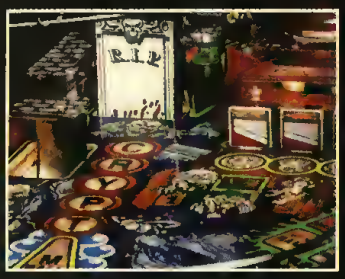
Crypt Keeper Haunts Arcades

Data East s latest pinba **Tales from the Crypt**, features the Crypt Keeper's own voice high-flying vertical and horizontal ramps plus a tombstone that sinks into the playfield

Based on the comic book first published in 1950 and the HBO television series the game stars vampires, monsters, mummies, and even a shaking cabinet to make the play experience more dramatic.



Tales From the Crypt pinball introduces frightening action.

Indy Jones To Talk In Mac CD Adventure

ndiana Jones has a speak- ng role in an original Macintosh CD-ROM from LucasArts **Indiana Jones & The Fate of Atlantis**, scheduled for release this spring. The company is pul ing out al the stops for what they say is the largest and most complex game they've ever published with over 200 rooms more than 100 pieces of original background art, and rotoscoping for better character appearance and movement.

Based on players choices early in the game the adventure follows one of three trails either a puzzle-oriented Wits path the action-oriented Fists path or the dialogue-oriented Trust path The game features puzzles with alternative solutions, and requires ndy to control a German sub steer a hot air balloon and operate Atlantean machinery

Kid Disks Get Holiday Art

Imager has a couple of disks of cl p art for Broderbund s **Kid Pix** and Davidson s **Kid Works 2** that wi help make holidays more festive **Kid Art: Holidays Plus** has holiday scenes and picture icons for birthdays, Christmas Hanukkah Valentine s Day and a dozen other special occasions It sells for $29 95

EG Readers' Popularity Poll

November 1993

These games were voted the favorites in EG s monthly poll see last page in this issue). Duplicate numbers represent ties.

Favorite Video Games
1. Street Fighter I Special Championship Edition Capcom
2 Mortal Kombat, Acclaim
3 Sonic 2 Sega

Favorite Multimedia Games
1. The 7th Guest, Virgin
2. Wolfenstein 3D, D
2. Final Fight, Sega
2 Dracula Viacom

Favorite Computer Games
1. X-Wing, LucasArts
2 Civi ization MicroProse
3. Wolfenstein 3D D/Apogee

Favorite Coin-Ops
1. Mortal Kombat, Acclaim
2 NBA Jam Wi iams

Sound System Improves SNES

nterplay announced development of a tool for improved sound the **Advanced Real-time Dynamic Interplay** (ARDI) **Sound System** for the SNES. It s based on a M DI nterface that plugs into the cartridge slot and plays music direct from the SNES ROM a memory-saver) providing the composer with control over the sound ch p features of the SNES **Claymates** and **The Lost Vikings** used the ARDI Sound System to produce music and sound effects that occupy only 18K and 11K of memory respectively

Sierra Space Sim Uses Real Theories

Sierra s **Outpost** travels beyond space gaming into science fact to create a strategy game that uses NASA s theories of space exploration to simulate colonization of new worlds. The gamer must discover and explore new planets, then establish and maintain colonies, plus eventually accumulate enough materials to build a Mothersh p to enable further travel Wh le this may not seem like anything new for space exploration games, the methods by which the player must conduct himself are based heartily in facts and information gleaned from various research projects conducted by the National Aeronautics and Space Adminis tration over the past yers.

The gamer uses science facts throughout the game For example the ship can be fueled on Jupiter's hydrogen atmosphere· the gamer uses nanotechnology to build robots, and genetic research can be uti ized to help create new food sources for mankind

Outpost should reach the market in March

Sierra Buys Coktel

Sierra On-Line Inc. acquired Coktel Vision S.A. the French publisher of educational and entertainment software (**Gobliiins**, **Inca**) for approximately $5 million, plus earnout payments. Prior to the acquisition Sierra distributed Coktel s software on an exclusive basis. Coktel's founder Roland Oskian will assume responsibilities for Sierra's overal European business according to Ken Williams Sierra president.

Williams said "This will give Sierra the opportunity to expand its sales and distribution of educational software in Europe [and] provide the critical mass required to manufacture our products in Europe and open an additional European sales/support office "

Oskian added, "I don't believe that Sierra has been realizing its full revenue potential in Europe Our goal is to try to realize this potential as profitably and quickly as possible."

Time Runs Out On Sierra Mac Titles

Eight Sierra Macintosh adventures locked-up on September 18, 1993, due to an equation for time-related algorithms that was exceeded by that date Not caused by any virus it will not affect any other files The problem can be corrected by **McDate**, an update file available from Sierra. To play the games until the patch is received, change the date on the Control Panel to September 17 1993 or earlier

The Macintosh titles are **Leisure Suit Larry I** & **IV** **Freddy Pharkas, Space Quest I** & **IV** **The Castle of Doctor Brain, King's Quest V** & **VI** and the **McDate** patch can be obtained from Prodigy American On-Line, Genie and CompuServe or direct from Sierra Patch Disks, Dept.10, P O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

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American Laser Joins Publishing Partnership

American Laser Games is the first company to sign on with Crystal Dynamics Publishing Partner Program which wi provide distribution and marketing services for ALG s hit games **Mad Dog McCree**, a sharp-shooter and **Who Shot Johnny Rock?** a gangster game

ALG based in Albuquerque started n the coin-op business in 1990 with the first real motion picture interactive games and is expanding nto the home market with CD-ROM software for PCs Sega CD and the 3D0 system

Crystal Dynamics will now be marketing ALG's game titles.

Interplay Eyes New Horizons

Interplay President Brian Fargo sneak-peeked a pair of titles now in development that should hit the market before summer. **Nightmare** (working title) is an action adventure for the SNES that Brian described as "...a sort of Out-of-This-World, Flashback-style of interactive adventure, with rotoscoped animation." For PC players, the licensed **Official US Chess Federation Chess** (w.t.) is an advancement of Interplay's **CheckMate** game. It goes previous programs one better since it allows the player to actually earn points toward entrance requirements for Federation chess tournaments. Interplay is also working on **Star Trek** (w.t.) for the SNES, and their first licensed Genesis game, **The Lost Vikings.**

The company also made an agreement with Philips that gives Interplay exclusive rights to develop DOS and MAC CD-ROM versions of three CD-I games. **Voyeur** stars Robert Culp and Grace Zabriskie in a Hitchcock-styled thriller; **Caesar's World of Gambling** simulates casino games, and **Zombie Dinos from the Planet Zeltoid** combines camp and science in an evil plot.

Top Video Games

As of October 25, 1993

The following figures are provided courtesy of Babbages

Super NES

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Secret of Mana*, Square Soft
3. *Top Gear 2* Kemco
4. *Super Mario All-Stars*, Nintendo
5. *Street Fighter II Turbo*, Capcom
6. *The 7th Saga*, Enix
7. *Boxing Legends of the Ring*, ElectroBrain
8. *Super Caesar's Palace*, Virgin
9. *The Ren & Stimpy Show* THQ
10. *Super Star Wars*, JVC

Sega Genesis

1. *Disney's Aladdin*, Sega
2. *NHL Hockey '94*, Electronic Arts
3. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
4. *Bill Walsh College Football* Electronic Arts
5. *Street Fighter II* Capcom
6. *Ms. Pac Man*, Tengen
7. *Shining Force*, Sega
8. *Splatterhouse 3*, Namco
9. *PGA Tour Golf II* Electronic Arts
10. *Jurassic Park*, Sega

Game Boy

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Super Mario Land*, Nintendo
3. *Legend of Zelda Link s Awakening*, Nintendo
4. *Kirby's Dream Land*, N ntendo
5. *Super Mario Land 2*, Nintendo
6. *Baseball* N ntendo
7. *Final Fantasy Legend III* Square Soft
8. *Tetris*, Nintendo
9. *Jurassic Park*, Ocean
10. *Star Trek The Next Genera tion*, Absolute

NES

1. *Tetris 2*, N ntendo
2. *Jurassic Park*, Ocean
3. *Kirby's Adventure*, N ntendo
4. *Caesar's Palace*, Virgin
5. *Tecmo Super Bowl* Tecmo
6. *Bubble Bobble 2* Taito
7. *Star Trek:The Next Genera tion*, Absolute
8. *Dragon Warrior IV* Enix
9. *Tetris*, Nintendo
10. *Joe and Mac*, Data East

Sega Game Gear

1. *Mortal Kombat*, Acclaim
2. *Jurassic Park*, Sega
3. *Columns*, Sega
4. *World Series Baseball* Sega
5. *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, Sega
6. *Streets of Rage 2*, Capcom
7. *Tom & Jerry* Sega
8. *T2-The Arcade Game*, Acclaim
9. *Jeopardy* Gametek
10. *Land of Illusion* Sega

Sega CD

1. *Joe Montana s NFL Football*, Sega
2. *Silpheed* Sega
3. *Spider-Man vs. The King pin*, Sega
4. *Ecco the Dolphin* Sega
5. *Night Trap*, Sega
6. *Batman Returns*, Sega
7. *Road Avenger* Renovation
8. *Final Fight*, Sega
9. *Jaguar XJ220*, JVC
10. *Time Gal* Renovation

Animals Get Brutal On Sega CD

Gametek is putting the finish ng touches on **Brutal** a cartoon martial arts game with a pointed difference from other titles of the genre nstead of having human combatants

Brutal stars fighting animals such as Kung Fu Bunny Kendo Coyote Foxy Roxy and more characters that bash and bean each other

The characters each start with a few moves then earn more by winning belts Humor comes from the characters and the unlikely cartoon fights with mpossible angles and rubber bodies.

The game should be ready for Sega CD play in March

Top Software Sales

October 1993

The list of top-selling computer software was compiled by PC Data of Washington, DC. based on units sold by ten retail chains, representing over 1300 stores.

TOP MS-DOS Games

1. *Lands of Lore*, Virgin
2. *X-Wing Mis.#1, Imperial Pur suit*, LucasArts
3. *X-Wing*, LucasArts
4. *Sim City* Maxis
5. *The 7th Guest*, Virgin
6. *Betrayal at Krondor* Sierra
7. *Warlords II* SSI
8. *Stronghold*, SSI
9. *HardBall I* Accolade
10. *Links 386 Pro*, Access

Top CD-ROM Titles

1. *The 7th Guest*, Virgin
2. *King's Quest VI* Sierra
3. *Romaterial* Moon Valley
4. *MPC Wizard*, Aris
5. *Lord of the Rings*, nterplay
6. *Day of the Tentacle Maniac Mansion* LucasArts
7. *Dune* Virgin
8. *Just Grandma and Me* Broderbund
9. *Ind. Jones & The Fate of Atlantis*, LucasArts
10. *Compton's Encyclopedia Upgrade* Compton s

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A New Year Celebration

by Jay Carter

In the world of coin-op entertainment, it is the location owner or operator who often determines our fate as players. They are the ones deciding which equipment to purchase. We have to hope that what they select is, in fact, something that we're going to like not just for the first few weeks but, ideally, for months or years to come.

Since the operators have such a position of power, it should not be a major surprise that their trade show looms as a significant industry event—which it has for decades. Once again the Amusement & Music Operators Association staged its annual International Exposition (AMOA Expo '93) to celebrate just what coin-op has become. More than 8,000 attendees flocked to the Anaheim Convention Center in Southern California to visit more than 1,000 booths featuring everything from kiddie rides, to jukeboxes, video games, pinball machines and novelty amusement equipment.

The result was a weekend that, lest anyone think it was only fun and games, was really comprised of educational seminars and a great deal of selling all of the latest attractions. In addition, it was an occasion to honor those machines and leading edge technologies that made a difference during 1993 and helped shape our future.

More characters are available in the new arcade version of Mortal Kombat.

Voted on by those individuals who make a living from the quarters and tokens we drop in coin slots across the land, the Most Played Video Game of the Year was Midway's **NBA Jam**; Most Played Pinball Game (for the second year in a row) was the formidable **Addams Family** from Bally/Midway; Most Played Conversion Kit video game went to **Mortal Kombat** from Midway; while the Most Innovative Technology award was voted for Sega's **Virtua Racing**. Last, but not least, was the Best New Game at AMOA Expo '93 which was won by Midway's all-new **Mortal Kombat II**.

It was a simple venture to the highlight of the show where the action was truly non-stop. Leading the way was the much awaited unveiling of **Mortal Kombat II** with its new characters, including: Baraka, Jax, Kung Lao, Kitana and Mileena; its more complex secret moves, fatalities and a story line that picks up where the original **Mortal Kombat** ended.

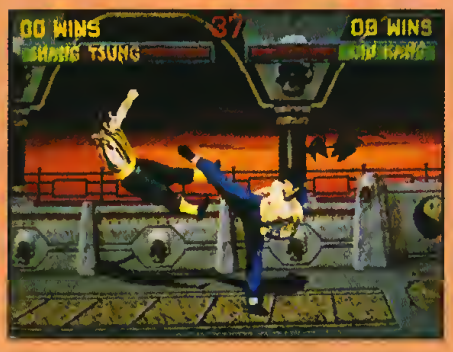
Also on the scene was the next iteration of what has become Capcom's franchise property. **Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers**, displayed many of the reasons why it is what it is with a roster of characters that have now been expanded to a sweet 16 with the introduction of Cammy, Dee Jay, Fei Long and T. Hawk. In addition, with four new country backgrounds (England, Jamaica, Mexico and China) and Q-Sound virtual audio, **Super Street Fighter** exhibited its four cabinet tournament configuration which allows for four monitors to be linked together for up to eight-player head-to-head competition.

If you're fortunate enough to encounter this setup at your local game room, be aware that sudden elimination will determine all rankings through three matches. From the second match on, winners play winners and losers play losers. There's a no-draw, winner-takes-all rule. If there are no knock-outs or a TKO, your score will determine who wins.

Moving along through the martial arts category, there were a host of other notable releases to keep on the lookout for with Sega's **Virtua Fighters** giving a glimpse of where future development may be headed. The highly stylized visuals of such on-screen combatants as Jacky, Wolf and Cage took Sega's award-winning polygon graphics into a new arena, with full rotation, overhead angles and instant replays. Truly impressive.

We'll take a closer look at other contenders (or pretenders) to the throne in upcoming issues, including **Power Instinct** from Altus, Konami's **Metamorphic Force** and **Violent Storm**, JCO's **Rebellion-X**, **Survival Arts** from American Sammy and an entry from Data East called **Night Slashers**.

Although there were a few gun games on the show floor, the only conventional



MK purists will be treated to new scenery and more advanced techniques.

Super Street Fighter II employs the best ingredients from SF2, with new twists.

video game effort was the two-player **Alien 3—The Gun** from Sega. Using a first-person perspective, the aliens are at it again looking for human hosts on planet Fiorina 16. Your mission is to defend the marines and wipe out the aliens with a gun that can be anything from a flamethrower to a grenade launcher by use of the trigger and side fire button.

With 3-D scrolling that can take you into the action as well as side-to-side, the methodology of 'powering up' is similar to Midway's successful **Terminator 2,** except for the fact that you have to deal with some insidious aliens instead of a deadly T-1000.

Deluxe sit-down driving games took to the fast track led by Namco's exceptional **Ridge Racer** that features 3-D polygon graphics along with 'texture mapping' for an incredibly realistic experience. Add in a 33" monitor and a 6-speed shifter and it's no wonder that once you're behind the wheel you can forget it's just a game. The same might also be said of the first effort in this game genre from Strata with their introduction of **Driver's Edge**.

Wanting a sporting chance the next time you're at the arcade? Konami is hoping that their end-to-end view of the court is what you'll shoot for with **Run and Gun**. This five-on-five basketball game is an attempt to slow down the offensive attack of **NBA Jam**.

Meanwhile, Strata is counting on the power of the NFL to put you on the field in a one- to four-player gridiron fight of **Hard Yardage**.

Explosive action and new maneuvers will delight fans of the original SF2.

Virtual reality, which still remains the current buzzword when it comes to video, was in evidence with VR8's new **Virtual Star Fighter**, Alternate Worlds Technology set up of **Reality Rockets**, a 3-D computing engine for virtual reality game development from Spectre Interactive Systems, and Visions of Reality's (VOR) 7 x 8-foot spaceship pods displaying the outer space adventure **Cybergate**.

Rounding out the highlights of the AMOA Expo was the continued emergence of pinball as a lead coin-op attraction where licensing would appear to rule the day. Flipper fanatics will be able to travel through a fantastic series of missions with their favorite starship characters in Williams' deep space extravaganza, **Star Trek: The Next Generation**, or quell violent disturbances in the Mega-City One world of Bally's crime-fighting judge and jury, **Judge Dredd**. Data East rides the wave with Arnold Schwarzenegger's **Last Action Hero**, featuring digitized sounds and exciting multi-ball play, and **Tales From the Crypt** for a terror-filled jaunt through a spooky world of pinball mayhem and mischief. And to prove that original pinball themes are still viable in the market, Premier Technology showcased **Gladiators** and the snow-skiing pegged **Wipe Out**, with Alvin G & Company looking to deal a sure winner with **Pistol Poker**.

All in all, the beginning of the year starts with optimism and a diverse variety of games that should be finding their way into your local game emporium before too long. The new video and pinball titles use the latest techniques available to programmers, and these units are sure to give you a decent warm-up on those chilly winter nights. Give them a try and next time around we'll take a closer look at the best of the current crop. Until then, as always, keep on playing and have some fun.

A New Breed of Park... A

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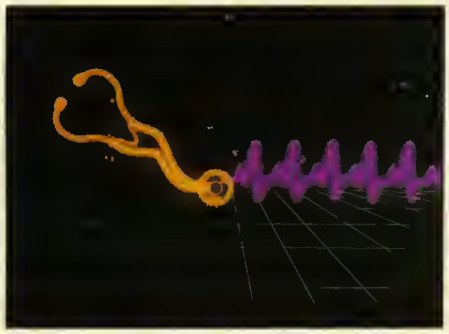

GAME DOCTOR

Secrets of the Game Gear!

Greetings and salutations, Gaming Grasshoppers, I see you are back for another sip from the river of knowledge. Well, I could use a swig or two myself, and you folks can help me. We'd like to get postcards with complete addresses from the following readers who are owed Game Doctor Prize Packets: Ryan Hollingsworth of Greeacres, WA; Zaiad Aryanpure from Dublin, CA; and Matt Clarke of Myrtle Creek, OR. Remember, just a postcard will do (no sense paying for a whole envelope or anything), with a note indicating that I owe you a Prize Packet.

Next bit of business: **Mortal Kombat**, as in "How many 'mystery' characters are there, anyway?" Last issue, we printed a letter from Jay Giacchino of Irving, NY, inquiring as to whether Reptile has any more buddies. Well, knowing that EG exec editor, Bill Kunkel, was going to the AMOA coin-op show in Disneyland, and also being aware that Kunkel would be interviewing the creators of **Mortal Kombat** and **Mortal Kombat II**, I had him ask Ed Boon and John Tobias about "mystery" characters in the original game.

The answer: "Reptile is absolutely the only hidden character in **Mortal Kombat**. And people were so fascinated by him that Ed and John decided to make him a 'regular' in the sequel. And that's the total truth. Unless John and Ed were hosing me."

Thanks, Kunkel. I knew you'd make yourself useful sooner or later.

And now that we've taken care of the old business, let's get on to the new stuff with a quick query about the Game Gear from a user in Houston. Take it away, Lester...

Q: How many colors does the Game Gear have? I'm asking because a friend told me it only has 16, which seems impossible, since the graphics are almost as good as on the Genesis.

Also, how many Game Gears have been sold so far?

Les Baker
Yonkers, NY

A: *Technically, the Game Gear can only display 32 colors on screen simultaneously (well, actually it's 31 because two are transparent). I know that doesn't seem like many colors, but the secret lies in the number of total colors available to the Game Gear, which is more than 5,000. Simultaneous display is all well and good, but when you have a color palette of 5,000+, that means you have dozens and dozens of shades available for each color. As a result, some screens which only contain 16 colors can look absolutely incredible, because most of those 16 colors are different shades of the same color, which allows the artist to create more realistic textures and detailed shadings. As to total Game Gear sales, Sega expects that there will be a user base of 2.5 million of the little buggers by Christams '93.*

Q: I give up, Doc. This letter is the fifth question I've sent you since **EG** started. I've asked the same questions that other people ask, but you print their letters instead of mine. I have even sent self-addressed envelopes so you could answer me directly if not in EG, so tell me, oh mighty Game Doctor, *what do I have to do to get into your column?*

Paulie Tessorari
Pittsfield, MA

A: *I dunno, Paulie, but it looks like you just did it. But seriously, ladies and germs, I have been asked this question at least twice a month since I started in practice back in 1981. And I am going to give you stock answer #1.*

The Doc has tried to explain many times over the years why it is not possible to personally answer each and every query that comes this way. This, of course, does not stop readers from going crazy when they write letter after letter and none of them make it into a column. "Do you hate me?" one oversensitive soul once asked. The sadness in letters like these is tough for an old silicon sawbones like myself to take.

Often, the reason a writer doesn't get their letter published is because it's such a good question that several other readers have already asked it—such as in Paulie's case. Then again, sometimes it's because the page laid out 10 lines too long and your question just happened to take up that exact amount of space. It's unfair, but then so is life.

It's also impossible for me to personally answer letters—even when they include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. That just makes me feel more guilty when I don't answer. The Doc has a very busy practice and it's all the Game Nurse and I can handle to open and read all the letters we receive. Not that we want to discourage you—consider it a challenge! Hone those Qs as sharp as a Viking broadsword and some day, some way, you will be printed!

Only maybe not.

Q: What's the story with Project Reality, the deal with Nintendo and Silicon Graphics? Is it true that the system isn't coming to homes until 1995 at the earliest? And will this include a CD peripheral? Or *is* this a CD peripheral for the SNES?

Frankly, Doc, I'm confused.

Andy Conrad
Arlington Hts., IL

A: *This is all really up in the air right now, Andy, but the rumor mill reports that any day now an announcement will be made to the effect that Nintendo and SGI are moving up the date for the introduction of the Project Reality technology, perhaps by as much as a year! In other words, the system could make it into arcades—and possible even homes—by Christmas '94, rather than '95.*

As for a CD peripheral, most industry pundits are skeptical that CD will ever be available for the SNES. No, Project

Cao Cao

Nobunaga

Genghis Khan

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Genghis KHAN II

CLAN OF THE GRAY WOLF

Romance of The Three Kingdoms III

DRAGON OF DESTINY

Sega Genesis screens shown

Nobunaga's Ambition

KOEI

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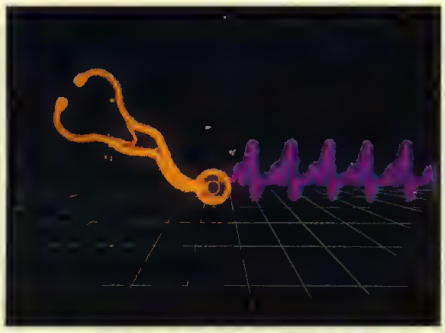

GAME DOCTOR

Reality is not a CD drive, it's an entirely new technology which Nintendo and SGI plan to use both in arcades and as a home system. Keep reading the EG news section for further details.

Q: When is Sega going to release their game based on the movie "Cool World"? I read about it months ago, but no word. Also, what's the story on this Japanese coin-op that's like **Tetris** and **Columns**? I have a friend who lives in Japan and he was telling me about it. Is it coming to America?

Stephen Jacobs
Kingston, NY

A: ***Cool World*** *is dead, one of several projects which Sega recently decided to dispose of.*

The Japanese game you're referring to will be released on the Genesis and Game Gear by Sega as ***Dr. Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine****. And while it superficially resembles* ***Columns****, I think you'll find that it's far more interesting. I'm told the game went over big time at the Japanese coin-op shows and it may well be the Next Big Thing over there. It should be available any day now.*

Q: Doc, I'm a big fan of movies about video games—like *Tron*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Wargames* and *The Wizard*—and I was wondering which game-related movies you've enjoyed the most over the years.

David Bishop
Seattle, WA

A: *That's an interesting question, David, and I'd love to have readers write in with their favorite electronic game-related movies.*

I think Tron *is the most ambitious of the films mentioned, while* Last Starfighter *came closest to actually being a video game—much like the Jim Henson film* Labyrinth *was the closest thing I've ever seen to an adventure game on the silver screen—right down to the use of the mysterious, untested Starfighter weapon that turns out to be—a smart bomb!*

The Doc also enjoys films with arcade or video game related sequences. The anthology film Nightmares *features a young Emilio Estevez as a game wizard who is too skillful for his own good. He ends up the way concerned parents sometimes fear their own offspring will: trapped inside an arcade game!*

Then there's the movie Scanners II, *which opens with a killer scene of a renegade scanner destroying an entire arcade with his psi powers!*

Q: 'm a golf nut and an electronic gamer for over 10 years now. I remember when golf simulations first appeared, the one course that everyone just had to have was **Pebble Beach**. However, with all the new golf programs, I haven't seen a modern version of **Pebble Beach** in years. What gives?

Dufferman
Tempe, AZ

A: *Prepare to break open that champagne, Dufferguy, because Access just spent Big Bucks to get Pebble Beach as a course disk for its* ***Links 386*** *program and Sega has* ***Pebble Beach Golf Links*** *coming for the Genesis. The reason for Pebble Beach's absence from the scene lo, these many years seems to be the prohibitively high price tag the P.B. folks placed on their name value.*

Q&A Quickies: Several readers continue to ask about a color Game Boy and Nintendo continues to issue denials. But check this out: we've heard rumors that the Big N has a *portable SNES* on its assembly lines. No word on whether standard SNES/Super Famicom software will run on the system or whether new versions of the same games will be required. Film at eleven... It has been previously written that Sega's new 32-Bit Saturn system (which is preparing to debut in Japan) will be Genesis compatible. Well, that *was* the plan, originally, but that notion has apparently been nixed by the SoJ techies, who felt it was an impractical addition to the new system. In that case, don't expect the Saturn to orbit the U.S. until Xmas '95 at the earliest... Finally, for all you **Mortal Kombat** fans, while it has been rumored that Williams may be publishing home video game versions of its hit coin-ops, don't expect **Mortal Kombat II** to be among them, as Acclaim has reportedly already begun work on the sequel.

Remember to send your Qs, comments, corrections and dirty laundry to:

The Game Doctor (EG)
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

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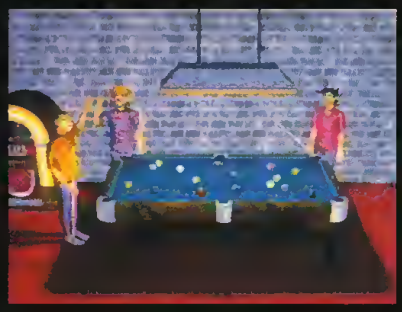

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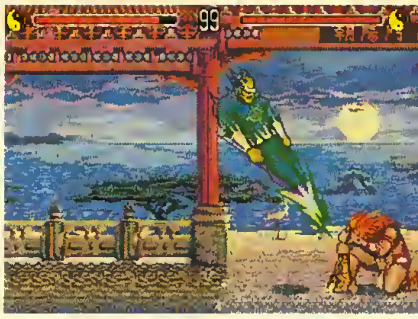
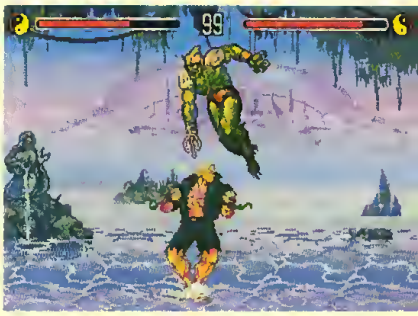
TO PREPARE FOR ETERNAL CHAMPIONS, USE STREET FIGHTER II AS YOUR TRAINING WHEELS.

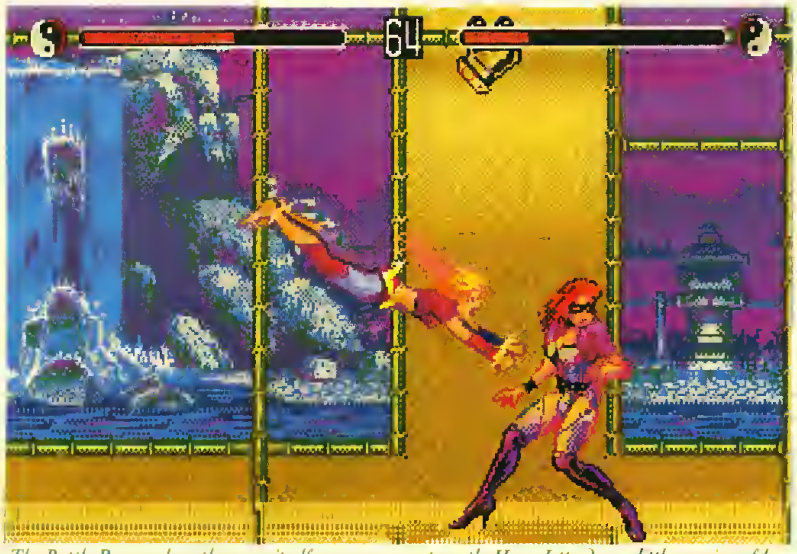


In a full force attack, Blade humbles Slash in China. Look at these warriors, they're huge. A wimp like Blanka wouldn't stand a chance.



In the Tournament Mode, Trident pulls a downward flying attack on Midknight. 32 players can compete here, 20 more than any other fighting game.

Check out Rax doing a few kicks in the practice mode. Name another game that lets you hone your skills before battle. Don't rack your brain, there isn't any.



The Battle Room, where the room itself can sap your strength. Here, Jetta does a little zapping of her own with a double-fisted air-dive on Shadow. Hey Johnny Cage, scared you'll get whipped by a girl?

You probably aren't prepared for such an intense fighting game. Few are. That's why we've included the Holo-Trainer and Instant Replay to help ready you for fierce competition. You'll battle nine huge warriors, each with their own martial arts fighting style like Jeet Kune Do and Ninjitsu. With 35 killer moves, any of these guys could kick Guile's butt. Get good enough and you'll discover all the cool Overkills. Prepare yourself. Because when it comes to pain, it's better to give than receive.

SEGA GENESIS

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Electronic Gamer of the Year: Tom Kalinske

EG salutes Sega of America's dynamic president

by Arnie Katz

It's ike something you'd see in a Western The enigmatic gunslinger rides into the dusty frontier town. The citizens are wary even antagonistic, about the newcomer who has suddenly appeared in their midst. Then the real crisis besets the town, and the outsider is the one who risks everything to save the day.

When Tom Kalinske assumed the post of President and CEO of Sega of America slightly more than two years ago, no one in the industry knew what to expect. Would he simply manage the business transmitting orders from SoJ headquarters to their California office?

Industry veterans weren't shy about voicing their skepticism, either. Gaming is a tightly knit fam ly, sometimes overly suspicious of the new folks moving in next door

Although electronic gaming was included in his professional background, Kalinske's reputation was primarily as a toy business executive. He had compiled a great track record in that field every-one acknowledged, but could he adapt to the unique demands of interactive entertainment?

Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog helped the hobby gain new ground in popularity.

As we begin 1994, there is no longer any doubt about the verdict. The selection of Tom Kalinske as our 1994 Gamer of the Year is merely confirmation of the status that this visionary energetic CEO has already earned with his peers and the general public. No executive has had a greater or more positive, impact on gaming in this decade.

SoA has had many able executives in the presidential office. Only Kalinske has accomplished the goal that eluded all his predecessors: Sega passed Nintendo in home video gaming in the United States

What a difference a couple of years has made! Sega held only a sliver, perhaps 10 percent, of the 8-Bit U.S. market with the Master System. Under Kalinske's leadership, Sega has pushed the 16-Bit Genesis to the leadership position in full-size cartridge consoles. The SNES remains a potent sales competitor but the Genesis has beaten back its stiff challenge to stay on top. In fact, most observers believe that the Genesis now has so much momentum that the gap will widen this winter.

One reason for the success is that Kalinske has helped put SoA into the cutting edge of stateside product development. The company that once marketed slightly revised versions of Sega of Japan releases has fostered such gems as **ToeJam and Earl**, **Sonic II** and **Ecco the Dolphin.** American designers and developers are creating state-of-the-art cartridges that are uniquely attuned to mass culture in this country

Though Kal nske has no direct control over Sega's third-party support network, it is impossible to ignore the way independent publishers have thrived during his tenure at Sega At the very least he must be credited with fostering the climate that has attracted such high-calibre third-party support for the Genesis. **John Madden Football** (Electronic Arts **Mortal Kombat** (Acclaim), and **Aladdin** (Virgin-Sega) are among the recent titles that have pumped up enthusiasm for the Genesis.

Another hallmark of Kalinske s tenure at Sega is the excellence of its consumer advertising. Its "Welcome to the Next Level" campaign for Genesis, as well as the brilliant commercials for Game Gear did much to establish an image of Sega as the state-of-the-art choice. The ads are visual feasts that, nonetheless, manage to convey the essence of the hardware and software fairly and accurately

The successful introduction of Sega CD—almost half of **EG** s readers own them—is another milestone achievement. Despite a limited software catalogue, Sega s dramatic ad campaign has put over the concept with the public, which paves the way to the mass multimedia market expected to come into being by the late 1990s.

Working on concert with SoJ, Kalinske is helping restructure Sega from a purely video game company into a broad-spectrum marketer of interactive electronic entertainment. The Sega Network, the Virtual Reality glasses, and the Activator all demonstrate Sega's intention to strive for leadership in every aspect of the emerging technology

Tom Kalinske is more than just SoA s war chief in the unrelenting fight for market share. In an era in which many companies operate as though they can't see beyond the next profit statement, Tom Kalinske has worked tirelessly to make Sega responsive to consumers the industry, and the long-term health of the hobby.

His vision cut through indifference and indecision and made Sega the first major company to establish Parental Guidance Ratings for electronic games. When he couldn't achieve a consensus with third-party cartridge makers, Kalinske took the risk of creating the rating system and its board of experts.

This is the first time **EG** has designated a Gamer of the Year We debated the project at staff meetings for over a year and there were many potential candidates proposed and hotly debated

No honoree could be more appropriate than Tom Kalinske. As president and chief executive of SoA, and as an ethical and idealistic individual no one has made more outstanding contributions to contemporary electronic gaming.

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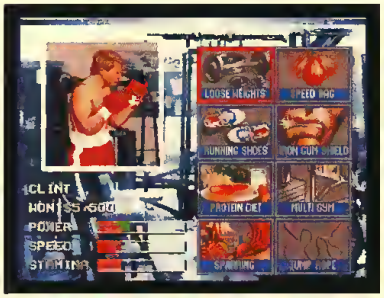
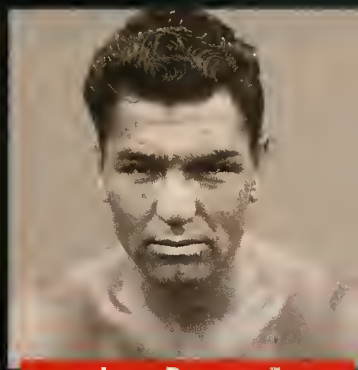


Build your own boxer and battle your way through the rankings against thirty challengers. Earn a shot at the title.

Muhammad Ali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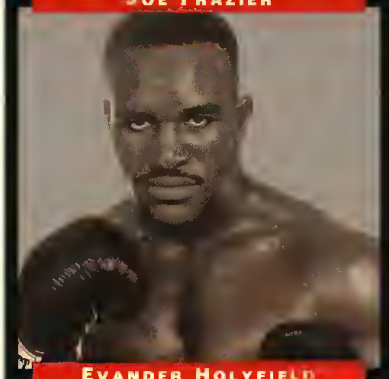
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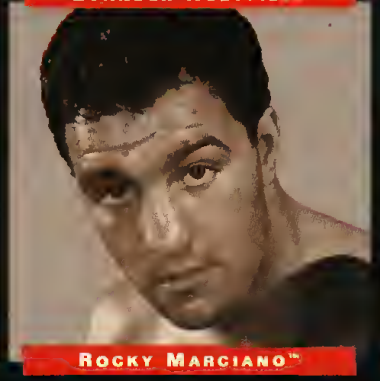
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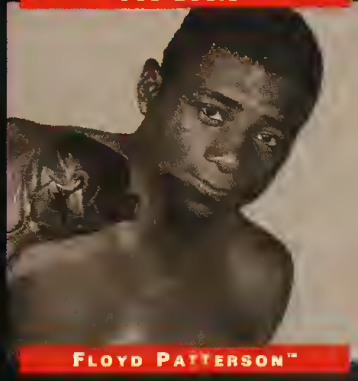
Floyd Patterson™

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The Ten Top Stories of 1993

And What They Mean To Gamers

by Joyce Worley & Ross Chamberlain

It was a year for dramatic announcements, momentous beginnings and significant changes. In the future, 1993 may well be remembered as the year that gaming mushroomed into the mainstream, since some of the top stories of the year concern the industry's steps to make electronic entertainment more widely available than ever before Here's a look at what happened.

1. Exciting new hardware was introduced. There was a wave of introductions of so-called black boxes, units intended to put the average consumer in touch not only with the already incredible quantities of information available on CD systems but eventually to pave the way for interaction with the world. Prior entries in this category included Commodore s CDTV and Philips' CD-I

In 1993, new systems joining the competition included Panasonic's REAL 3DO, (implementing Trip Hawkins' 3DO standard), audio-visual giant Pioneer's own LaserActive system and Commodore's

Commodore entered the gaming race with the impressive Amiga CD^{32}

Amiga CD^{32} All are 32-Bit systems using CD-ROMs for data supply Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, but all can take advantage of MPEG standards to allow viewing of FMV video enhancing game play and providing yet another medium for cinematic features and presentations. On the video game side, Atari uncaged the long-awaited 64-Bit Jaguar.

Game play on each of these new systems is potentially fantastic, but initially sparsely supported.

2. Multimedia takes off. It didn't happen overnight, but after a long slow beginning, multimedia technology and the software to use with it have finally come of age More multimedia equipment was sold in 1993 than in all its previous history put together The Sega CD moved quickly to become a dominant force in video gaming, and MS-DOS and Macintosh owners rushed to upgrade their computers to include CD

The Sega CD system launched Sega into the realm of CD-based games.

The real story, as always, was the software. Up until 1993, CD entertainments were often retreads of PC programs, but now there are dozens of top quality entertainments specifically designed for CD play.

3. Virtual Reality. Starting with the science-fiction concept of computer operators immersing themselves in an artificial environment, the term *virtual reality* (or VR) has been adopted by the marketing community and applied in varying degrees of appropriateness to everything from Virtuality game centers to the latest first-person perspective game. Purists contend that it should at least provide a 3-D audio-visual environment that appears to surround the player and with which he or she can interact.

Early in the year Sega announced a VR helmet in the works, for use with its Genesis system. It's currently scheduled for release this spring. **EG**'s Test Lab took a close look at a SNES and Genesis compatible helmet from VictorMaxx, called the StuntMaster, and the company is planning a further version called the CyberMaxx that will add PC compatibility In both cases the helmet essentially handles horizontal scrolling and stereo sound, while all other interaction takes place through the standard controllers.

Virtual Reality is coming closer, thanks to products like the VictorMaxx helmet.

There are far more elaborate—and costly—systems under development, involving motion sensors and gauntlets, chambers with surrounding video and multi-source sound. For the time being the gaming community may have to settle for goggles and earphones at home.

4. CD Rentals Begin. While video games have been available for rent from video rental stores for a while, early in 1993 Compton's New Media put specially packaged copies of some of its CD-ROM titles in video rental stores. Beginning with 22 titles in 35 stores, it was anticipated that over 50 titles would be available in more than 100 stores by the end of the year

In the summer, Compton s extended the concept by offering ibraries special assortments of its multimedia titles. Affiliate labels are included in both offerings.

It remains to be seen whether this is the beginning of a trend or will remain unique to Compton s.

5. New technologies made games better. There's always something new in this exciting hobby, but 1993 was a banner year for important technological introductions. Nintendo's FX Chip, introduced in the hit **StarFox**, made outer space pop off the screen. Specialty boards for sound and video proliferated. Full-Motion Video (FMV) showed up on computer and multimedia screens, making movie footage part of the gaming experience The MPEG-1 standard to regulate sound and motion was adopted by many developers. Top level games made increasing use of digitized speech and concert-quality music, expanding the sound board market. Multi-gaming, too, made giant strides with the introduction of four-player adapters for video gamers.

StarFox's FX chip helped to add spectacular visuals and sounds.

6. Censorship Comes To Gaming. Late in the year Sega announced that it would begin rating its games for violence and sexual content as guidelines for parents. This was also generally acknowledged as a step to open the door for adult-oriented video games. Nintendo, which already had a set of restrictive standards for all its American releases, claimed it saw no need for a rating system. All of this was

Mortal Kombat raised eyebrows with its violent content and great game play.

a prelude to the debut of **Mortal Kombat** on both systems, an event anticipated among gaming fans with great controversy that conveniently spilled over into the press just in time for that release.

7. Construction of the Digital Highway accelerated. Americans moved closer to the day when vast amounts of electronic data will be available via phone cable, and satellite transmission. Key legislation passed to allow transmittal of images by phone line, and messages by cable. Major communication companies formed significant alliances to facilitate home delivery, culminating in Bell Atlantic's acquisition of TCI.

Sega began work on The Sega Channel, a cable connection to deliver software direct to gamers. In Japan, Nintendo tested a satellite-delivery system. AT&T acquired interest in The Sierra Network, a significant step in AT&T's plans to bring entertainment, education, information and news to American homes.

8. The Movies Come To Games. The blocky figures from early gaming days are rapidly vanishing from home screens. As game graphics improved, it became practical to include real actors' likenesses in electronic entertainment products

What started as highly unusual incursions of professional actors into this media has become a significant movement. After the advent of Full-Motion Video, live actors represent an important step in the overall improvement of performances on disk. Top-drawer companies, such as Access, Sierra, Philips, Activision and Virgin, hired talented professionals to perform roles that in previous years might have been filled by the office and production staffs. And as seems inevitable, the new electronic media attracted the attention of Hollywood's Screenwriters and Actors Guilds, who had meetings with various industry execs toward formalizing roles for movie professionals n our industry.

Movies came to gaming in another dramatic way Hollywood established important business ties n the gaming industry as several movie studios made alliances with game development and publishing firms The marriage of talent seems appropriate. The movie moguls certainly know about plot and image, and the gaming industry knows how to combine them into an interactive experience

Viacom, HBO, King World and Paramount are just some of the companies spearheading the move into interactive entertainment. Their mega-buck power ensures some quality products.

9. Big Companies Start Playing Games. Corporate investments nto the electronic entertainment industry aren't new· big business has always eyed gaming as a source of increased revenues and put up the mega-bucks needed to help gaming companies grow But 1993 was especially significant, since the flow of big business investments increased proportionate to the growth of the gaming market.

The movie companies investing in the gaming industries, as mentioned above, became an important force. But publishing companies, as well, continued their long affiliation with gaming. The most dramatic incursion into home electronics was probably the Tribune Company's acquisition of Compton's Multimedia.

Another giant of industry rolled up its sleeves to play games, when IBM formed a game division and made a real commitment to entertainment software

10. Licensing Deals Made Gaming History Licensing is always an important movement in the gaming industry, but never more so than now when virtually every video game and a great many computer games have connections with products, characters books movies or TV programs.

"Gotta steal to eat!" Aladdin made a big jump to gaming screens everywhere.

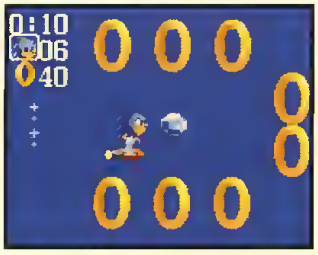
Aladdin was the focus of a historic licensing deal that put Disney Virgin and Sega together on the Genesis game, while Capcom worked with Disney to create the SNES version *Jurassic Park* made icensing history when Ocean and Sega paid the largest sum of money ever spent for gaming rights.

Licensing is no longer a one-way street. In 1993 various game characters (such as Bubsy Bobcat, Street Fighter, Double Dragon) got movie and TV deals of their own. In addition, there were an unlistable number of lunch box, T-shirt, coffee mug, merchandising deals starring video and computer game characters.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG CHAOS™

Sonic can explore tunnels and break through walls to find hidden rooms and power ups in the Gigapolis zone.

Tails here, with some serious air time in the Aqua Hill zone, eluding danger, nabbing rings and finding power ups.



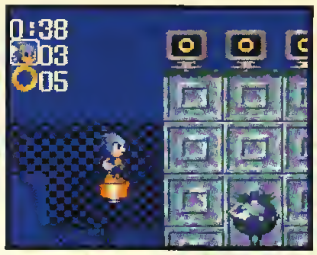
Rack up 100 rings and you're flying Air Sonic (strap on the rocket shoes) in the bonus round. The mission: rescue the emeralds.

Deep in the Electric Egg zone (no, it s not a rock group), you can take Tails through the tubes to find rings and other bonus items.

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

If the

Sega, Game Gear, Welcome to the Next Level Sonic Chaos, Sonic The Hedgehog and all related characters and indicia are



As if Sonic didn't jump high enough already, now he can hop on Pogo Springs to take him where no hedgehog has gone before.

SEGA™
GAMEGEAR™

Sonic is back as he battles Dr Robotnik's evil plan (is it the shoes?) to use the Red Chaos emerald in making nuclear lasers. Tails is hangin, too, and this time you control him. Both are bound for some serious air time (is it the shoes?), grabbing rings (is it the shoes?) and saving the emeralds from falling nto the wrong hands (it s got to be the shoes)

Rocket Shoe fits, wear it.

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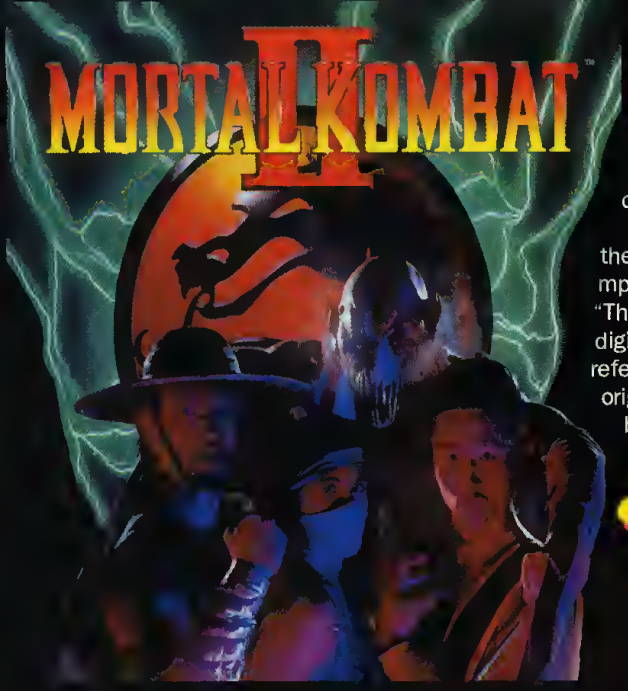

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Mortal K

by Bill Kunkel

When last we spoke to Ed Boon and John Tobias the Wi iams creative team responsible for **Mortal Kombat**, they unofficially acknowledged that a sequel was "a definite possibility " Beneath this apparent oxymoron lay the reality· the team was already hard at work on **Mortal Kombat II** a styl sh follow-up that has been nearly a year n development.

But the Boon-Tobias tandem didn't just improve the graphics and add a few new fighters they created an epic storyline involving the **Mortal Kombat** competitors Sensing that players would be curious about the characters they've been role-playing for so long, and being sharp enough to see the possibilities in developing the personalities Ed and John fashioned an entire world and peopled it with our friends from **MK** see sidebar]

As a result, **Mortal Kombat** is headed for comics movie theaters and even a possible TV series

"It s difficult to set up a storyline with an arcade fighting game " lamented John Tobias "You re pretty much mited to the Attract Mode " So they wil move beyond the boundaries of coin-operated enterta nment and establish **Mortal Kombat** as a crossover super-license

Of course this is not to say that the sequel doesn't feature some mpressive upgrades over the original "There s a gra n ness associated with digitized graphics " Ed acknowledged referring to the slightly raw look of the original game s characters which has been eliminated n the seque

"With this game John ust spent a lot of extra time We didn't create a new technology or anyth ng, he just worked over the mages On the first game a decision was made to allow the fighters to face a duplicate version of themselves which we hadn't allowed for originally So at the last minute we were forced to change palettes "

This time out, there were no last m nute revisions Ed and John also benefitted from extra computing power as wel as the fact that they had already

Sub Zero is back, and he brings some chilling tactics to the arcade game.

MK II: The Stars, the Story and the Secrets!

At the end of the first game, Liu Kang has emerged victorious in Mortal Kombat. Goro is presumed dead, while Shang Tsung has caused his soul to transmigrate back to the world which produced both him and Goro. It is in this strange land that the concept of Mortal Kombat was born.

Chinese mythology tells of an elemental force known as the Furies. Shang Tsung attempted to tamper with the cosmic order by opening a dimensional gate to the Furies, bringing chaos to all realities in the process.

Shao-Khan punished Shang-Tsung by imprisoning him on the Mother Realm (Earth), where he created the Mortal Kombat competition, only to ultimately be defeated by Liu Kang.

Now, Shang-Tsung's spirit has returned home, where he awaits execution for his failure. However, his quick wit and glib tongue save his bacon. He makes a deal with Shao-Khan, who spares his life and returns his youth, on the condition that Shang-Tsung returns to the Mother Realm in order to trap and transport the Mortal Kombat fighters to Shao-Khan's domain.

The stars of **Mortal Kombat II** are Reptile, a ninja character who first appeared as an unannounced extra in the original **MK**; Kung Lao, a relative of the fighter Goro vanquished to win the tournament; the twin sisters, Kitana and Mileena; the monstrous Baraka; and African-American hero Jax. Returning from the first game are: Cage, Raiden, Liu Kang, Sub-Zero, and Scorpion. Each of the new characters is fascinating, but

created the basic game engine "The original game had 6 MegaBytes or 48 MegaBits **Mortal Kombat II** has twice that, plus a 32-Bit CPU " Ed explained

The extra time and memory certainly shows n the finished product. The characters have an almost painterly appearance wh le the fighting animations remain intensely realistic. The backgrounds meanwh le are visual phantasmagorias depicting an amazing range of exotic settings

The creators also decided to exploit the tremendous nterest that was generated by the inclusion of a hidden character Reptile n the origina game "As you probably know there was a rumor that said there was a hidden character n **Street Fighter II**, which wasn't true But we thought. Gee what if there rea ly was a hidden character? So we added Reptile He turned out to be so popular we made him a regular character in the sequel "

Mortal Kombat II has so much hidden treasure that the Boon-Tobias team

New characters with exclusive moves add to the playability of MK II

believe it may take up to six months before players begin to tumble upon some of the super-secret extras "There s ust so much curiosity about th s game, about secret moves and fatalities " Ed marvelled "But we re going even further we re adding entire levels, which people won't learn about for months. We re really building on this We always wanted the games to have an element of mystery—like what *is* that weird thing flying n front of the moon in **Mortal Kombat**? Or who s that levitating monk in **Mortal Kombat II**?"

Speaking of mysteries we addressed the question of division of labor within the Boon-Tobias creative combine Who exactly does what? "Basically John does the graphics and do the programming. But when we first create a character we start out with a crude version and then we start experimenting to get a feel for them A lot of it is worked out n play testing, and John continues to have nput there

ORE Kombat!

look for Shang-Tsung's brute-ugly enforcer Baraka—who has a long-standing feud with Liu Kang—to become an immediate favorite among **MK II** partisans.

There are also some intriguing connections among the Kombatants. When Kung Lao was young, for instance, he trained with the White Lotus Society, as did Liu Kang, creating a bond between the two. And speaking of Liu Kang, wait'll you see his Flying Bicycle Kick!

Of course, no report on **MK II** would be complete without remarks on its violent content. Yes, there is blood, though once again there is a setting on each coin-op which allows the hemoglobin and the fatalities to be toggled off. Each fighter has at least two fatality moves, and, in fact, the fatalities are a prime clue in unearthing the secret levels creators Boon and Tobias alluded to in their interview And look for Reptile to leap on screen periodically to hand out hints.

The control system remains the same as in the original game: a joystick and five buttons (high and low kicks and punches and a block button). After each Kombat, **MK** icons appear on screen. Fighters need to collect a pre-set number of these icons before they can advance in the tournament.

"This game is deeply rooted in Chinese mythology, and in the concept of yin and yang, of balance," John Tobias explained, looking appropriately enigmatic. This helps to carry on the feel of an authentic story line behind the original game.

One last clue: Could Shao-Khan be related to Genghis Khan? You'll find out if you stay tuned to **EG** for the latest on this hot arcade.

— *Bill Kunkel*

Scorpion's sting comes through with his fantastic spearing move. Shish-ke-bob!

"John writes the stories though and add my input and there s a good bit of give and take But for the most part, we usua ly just let one another do whatever we do best." With what they've done so far it is apparent that this tag-team wi be around for awhile

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?

by Marc Camron

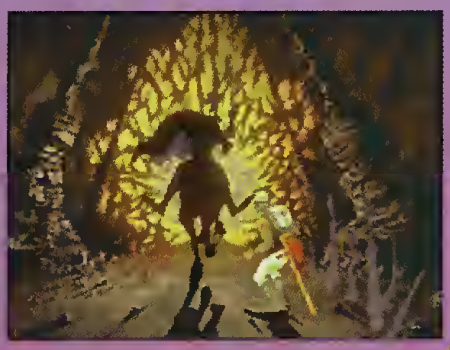
Up until now, full-motion video has really not been all that full—usually encompassing only 1/4 to 1/3 of the screen— and the motion hasn't been all that great 12-16 frames per second, rather than the NTSC video standard of 30.

Now, thanks to the wizards at Sigma Designs, true full-motion video is now available for the PC. It is called the Reel Magic Video board and one look at the games it plays will convince most that indeed there is some magic going on here.

The **Reel Magic** board uses MPEG compression standards to put full-motion video on a standard 3.5" CD. The MPEG compression allows for video to run at a full 30 frames per second, while displaying a considerably larger color palette. Up to one hour of video can be placed on a side.

The quality is nearly as good as VHS video and the action is perfectly smooth and fluid.

The requirements for the board are light, considering the current state of computers. You must have at least a 386 SX/16 machine with a minimum of 2MB of RAM. DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.1 are required, as is a single-speed (MPC 1) CD-ROM Drive. But the better the equipment, the better the board will work. It is nice to see compatibility with older machines.



Dragon's Lair is the first game to be released for the Reel Magic Board

Dirk the Daring hasn't looked this good for quite a long time!

Though it was promised that the board would come with Activision's much awaited **Return to Zork**, it turns out that the MPEG version wasn't quite ready in time. Instead, Sigma Designs has packed in a copy of **Dragon's Lair**, by ReadySoft.

Unlike earlier versions of this game, this **Dragon's Lair** is virtually identical to the arcade game that was so innovative in the early 1980s.

This game really shows off the power and quality of the MPEG compression standard. Where there was once only jerky, flat looking video, is now a fluid full-motion masterpiece. It is again like playing a cartoon.

Those who were looking forward to playing **Return to Zork** need not despair. Sigma Designs has included a letter of apology for the game not being ready and the assurance that if you complete the registration card for the board, a copy of **Return to Zork** will be sent to you at no additional cost.

In addition to ReadySoft and Activision, some of the other companies that are supporting the **Reel Magic** board and the MPEG standard are: Access, Aris, Interplay, Psygnosis, Sierra, Trilobyte and Virgin. Some of the next available games will include versions of **Police Quest 4** and **Lord of the Rings**.

Also, the **Reel Magic** board will support the **CD-Video** movies, which will start being releasing in 1994. These movies will be available the same as VHS tapes or Laserdiscs, and will use the MPEG compression to place top movies on CD. Machines like Philip's CDI and the 3DO will also offer upgrades into the MPEG realm.

So it's time once again to believe in magic...**Reel Magic** that is.

They've got a bullet with your name on it.

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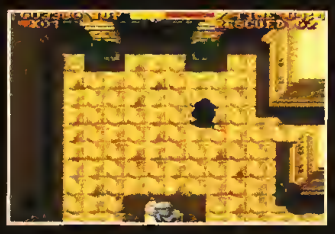
Five missions. Three perspectives. Untouchable drama.

Build a case against Scarface in 1929 Chicago. The funny money factory makes phony greenbacks, but the bullets are real!



You're Eliot Ness, a former D.A. It's only natural that you're called in for a hostage rescue at the County Courthouse.

Ness, you gotta go this one alone. Capone's trigger-happy henchmen are battling with a rival mob for territorial rights.

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The Genesis
Madden and Mont

by Arnie Katz

New football video games are now as much a rite of pre-season gridiron madness as the schedule of exhibitions and the debut of the year's footbal annuals at the newsstand The popular carts have new editions every season. The changes are seldom monumental but each pair of revisions improves in graphics sound and strategic challenge

It's the battle of two time-tested series, John Madden and Joe Montana. Both are definitely "A"-rated titles, but there can be only one champion Electronic Arts is generally considered to have won previous comparisons albeit some by a very slim margin, but Montana carts have hung in there and refused to give up the struggle for the top spot.

Which one wi win the 1994 Cartridge Super Bowl? That's the question only grueling play-testing by America s gamers can answer, but this article presents a comprehensive scouting report on the two contenders.

Introducing the Contenders

John Madden NFL 1994 (EA Sports /Genesis), programmed by Wil iam Robinson, has realistically rated real pro teams in a superb action-strategy format. Executive producer Scott Orr a legend in video sports gaming, has guided his talented team to create an "A" title.

After John Madden s welcome speech, in which his mouth moves enough to pronounce four times as many words, the users select teams, set the length of the game, and determine the weather The 4-Way Play unit permits 3 against 1,

Everyone's favorite coach/commentator returns with a revamped football game.

two-on-two, or al four versus the computer contests.

Lon Simmons provides professional, slick color commentary for **NFL Football 94, Starring Joe Montana** (Sega/Genesis), a Blue Sky production produced by Chris Smith One or two gamers use current and classic NFL teams with rated individual players in this outstanding gridiron cart.

Participants can call the plays and watch the athletes execute or use the controller to take personal command of the offense and defense It emphasizes use of real players and provides plenty of in-game stats like the drive summary to check performance

Game Options

The first option screen in **NFL Football '94 Starring Joe Montana** (hereafter **Montana**) lets gamers pick the number of players, type of game difficulty game length and teams Three schedules are included for use in league play

The second option screen reached through a menu item on the first, has off/on controls for speech, music, zoom referees passing cursor and penalties. The same menu lets video gamers pick the field view, weather and stadium

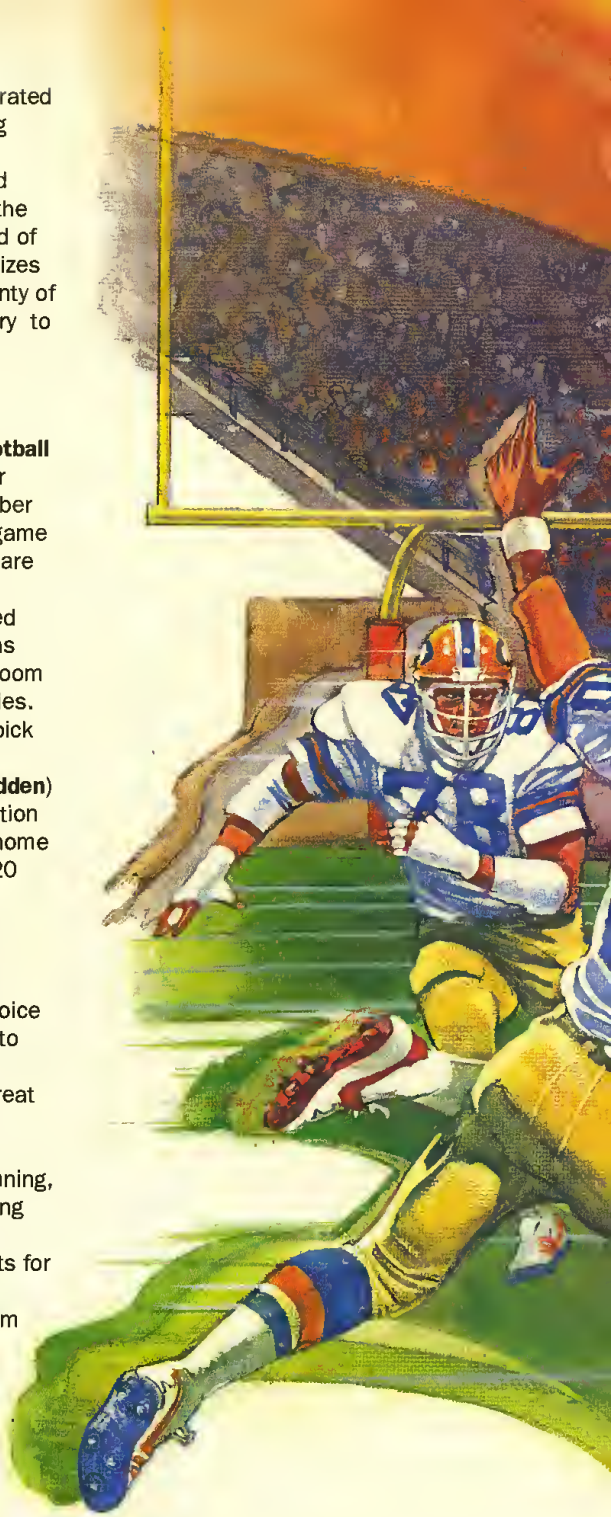
John Madden NFL 1994 aka **Madden**) allows choice of Game Mode exhibition playoff season franchise playoff) home and visitor teams, length of game (20 40 60 minutes and weather

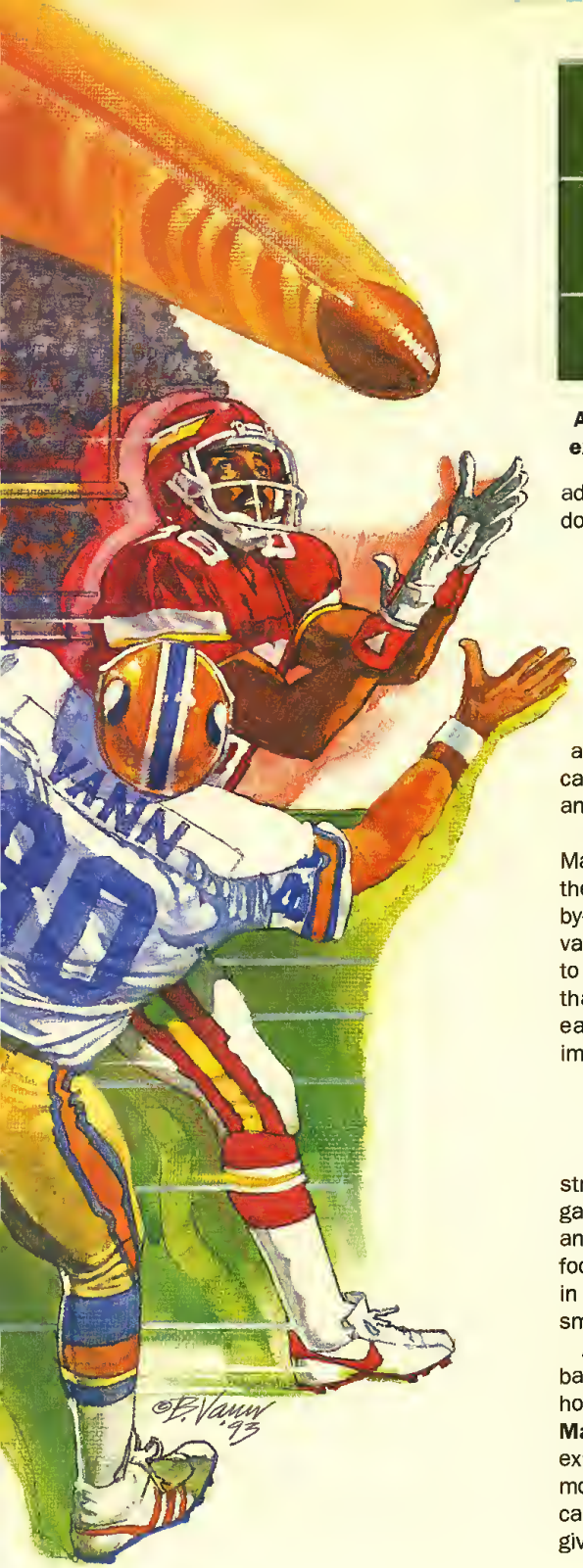
Madden has the more appetizing selection of team including current clubs, past champions, and all-time squads **Montana** a more imited choice of teams, but delves more deeply into individual player performance.

The Coach mode in **Montana** is great for those who just want to call plays With **Madden**, gamers are always involved in execution as wel as planning, though there are simplified play-calling and passing systems.

Madden offers more varied formats for extended campaigns, including fu l season play-offs, championship team play-offs, and franchise team play-offs **Montana** s three schedules make it easier to construct a season with the most appealing match-ups.

Madden has six weather conditions (fair rain, snow wind, night and variable to **Montana** s three (fair, rain and snow) Only the **Montana** cartridge has stadium selection and this





As in the NFL, when Montana returns, expect some incredible plays to occur

adds the possibilities of artificial turf and domed fields.

Statistics

Both titles are statistically influenced action contests. In-game numbers, including cumulative statistics and drive summaries, are available to players in either John Madden is also on hand with strategic advice in his cart, for those who want the celebrated analyst's help.

Madden has more pre-game data. Madden can provide a scouting report on the teams, and there is also a position-by-position comparison. It would be more valuable to compare one team s passing to the other team s secondary, rather than matching the quarterbacks against each other as though the skills of one impacted those of the other

Play-Calling

Montana and **Madden** give plenty of strategic flexibi ity without calling upon gamers to memorize playbooks or build an offense from scratch. The EA Sports footbal cartridge stil has a slight edge in ease-of-operation, but the gap is smaller than it was last season

Audibles are so important that quarterbacks have left teams in disputes over how to handle them. **Montana** and **Madden** both have them but the former explores this facet of pigskin strategy more thoroughly In **Madden**, the gamer can pre-program three audibles. This gives the video gamer a taste of the pressure on the passer to make a fast decision if he wants to switch plays before the snap.

Graphics

Madden shows the field from a goal line perspective at an angle that puts the observer fairly close to field level The players are more crisply drawn than in previous versions of the game, and the animation remains a strong point. The bal carrier is identified by a star

Dana Christianson s art team deserves super bowl rings for the **Montana** visuals. You can view the action from a vertical perspective see a horizontal field from straight overhead, or take in the entire gridiron from a blimp.

Montana's vertical playfield is closer to an overhead view than in **Madden** This makes the players a little smaller The zoom effect, which kicks in after the snap, compensates. The close-ups are amazingly lifelike and thrust gamers into the crunching on-field action.

Montana gets the edge in overall graphic design. **Madden's** main playfield has a slightly clunky look, in contrast to the extra pains the designer took with **Montana** s screen layout.

Both play selection screens are logically organized though **Madden** s format has become something of a standard. The **Montana** play-selection screen is hotter, because it shows formation shifts with little players before switching to a chalkboard presentation like in **Madden**.

Sound

Montana has very extensive speech though it is sometimes hartd to understand This includes full commentary on each play as well as quips about tough hits penalties and great execution Speech was the most remarkable innovation in last year's **Montana**, and it is much more effectively implemented this time

Madden also features speech though the result of the down is printed with no verbalization What's there is very high quality but there are more silences

The Score

Madden and **Montana** are both top video sports games, easily worth 90+ ratings. **Montana** wins our head-to-head competition with a long field goal in overtime Those who like the four-player mode, Madden s analysis, and the all-time teams may still prefer EA s cartridge

Everyone wins *this* Super Bowl especially video gaming consumers.

Super Bowl ana collide again!

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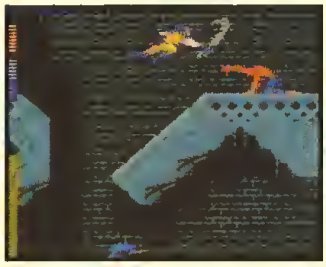
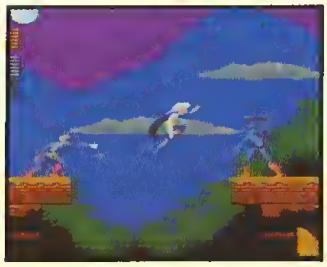


These Morlocks require a quick, fast attack or you're bound to take damage. Beware! The sewers can be very slippery



Some areas of Madripoor may be difficult to pass, so choose your X-Men wisely.

The Hellfire Club hides a special bonus room. Find it! (Be sure to look everywhere.

WELCOMETOTHENEXTLEVEL™

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The Computer Which Simulations

by Arnie Katz

The National Football League has embarked on an expansion program, and by coincidence, the computer football simulations category has grown too. In fact, the game world is expanding at a faster clip than the actual sport! The pros have chartered only two new franchises, but software publishers have released three titles two revisions and a newcomer in time for this winter's play-sessions.

Unti 1993, two products defined computerized footbal simulation **John Madden II** (Electronic Arts) and **MicroLeague Football II** (MLSA Interactive). There were other worthy games, but the mass market centered on these two The rest of the gridiron disks are strictly arcade or lack desirable ingredients like animated graphics.

Madden epitomizes the action-strategy approach, while **MicroLeague** embodies the all-stat format. The main difference: **MicroLeague** lets gamers coach and general manage, to which **Madden** adds on-field interaction.

MicroLeague Football II lets players use statistics and coaching to win.

MicroLeague considers the ability of the athletes and the interplay of coaching strategies to figure the result of a play These factors are important in **Madden**, but they are outweighed by the gamer's motor skills. An all-star defensive unit, backed by an NFL-quality playbook, can be completely ineffective if the gamer can't work the joystick efficiently. On the other hand many feel more involved when they control the execution as well as personnel and strategy.

Neither type is inherently superior As always the format that gives the most satisfying play-experience is the one you should buy Fortunately for pigskin simulation fans, publishers have introduced several new and extensively revised games this year

NFL Coaches Club Football

Varied viewing angles and a choice of action or coaching modes highlight **NFL Coaches Club Football** (MicroProse/MS-DOS). Ed Fletcher and Doug Whatley, the design duo for this 1to 4-player simulation have expertly blended the excitement of full-screen graphics with an in-depth replication of pro football. **Coaches Club** is equally suitable for a beer-and-pretzels session between halves of the Super Bowl and a serious league simulation.

One or two humans can control each team, and there is a skillful robot adversary for solitaire sessions. The Coach Mode keeps the gamer on the sidelines, shuffling lineups and calling plays, while the Action Mode puts one gridder under direct control. (If two gamers jointly run a team, each controls a player.)

Computerists operate **Coaches Club** with mouse, joystick or keyboard. An intelligent cursor which highlights any choice to which it is pointing, gives a definite edge to mouse or joystick over the keys.

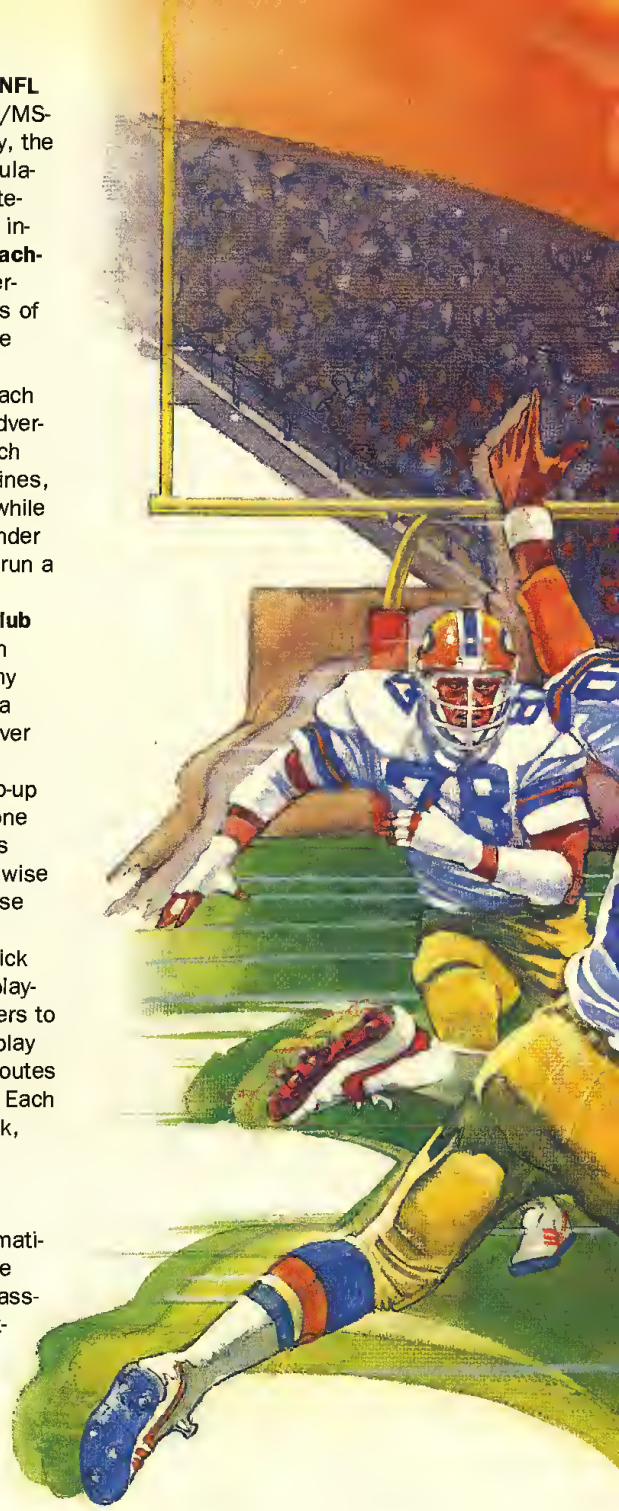
Coaches set strategy with the pop-up play windows, one for offense and one for defense. A countdown clock ticks away the precious seconds and it's wise to make selections before the offense catches you napping.

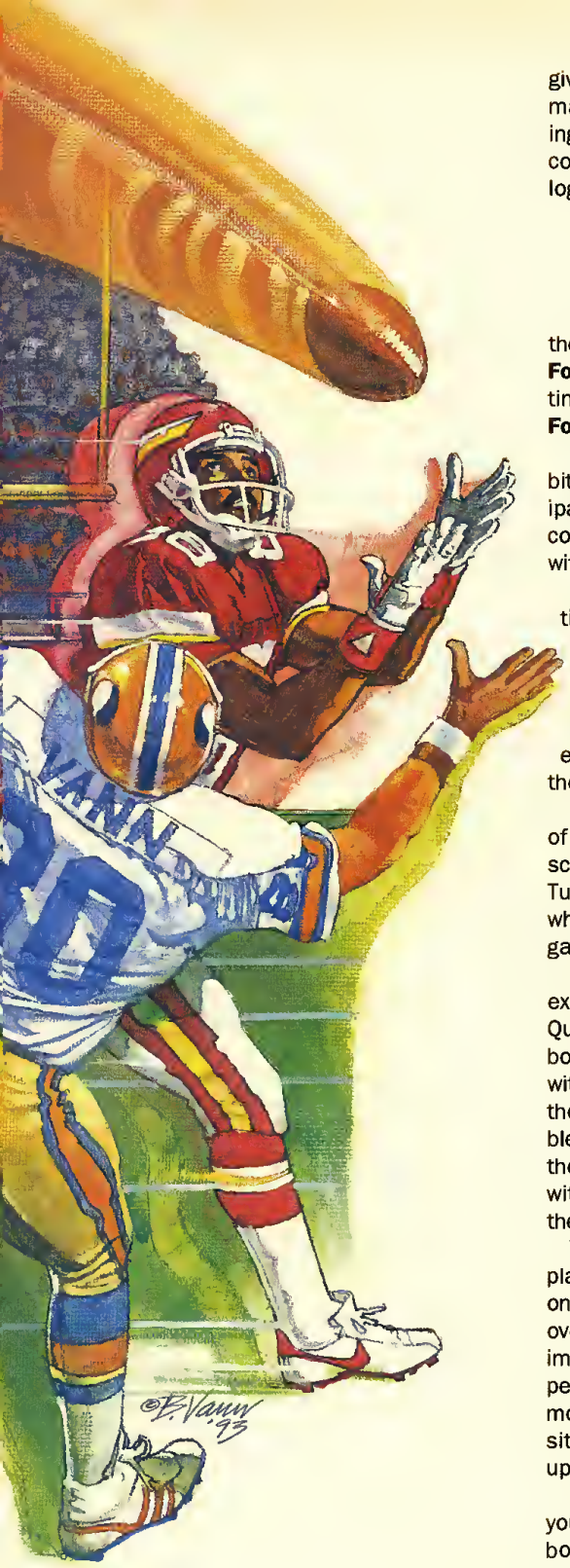
The Play Windows let the coach pick the desired tactic from the team's playbook. Clickable buttons allows gamers to cycle through the plays, repeat the play from the previous down, or flip the routes on passing and running alignments. Each team comes with a realistic playbook, which the user modifies with simple adjustments.

In the Action Mode, active control automatically switches control automatically passes to the right player at the snap, such as the quarterback on passing plays. Active control has be shifted around the gridiron quickly enough to change the course of the current play.

Coaches Club shows the game from eight angles, all user selectable. The 'F' keys change the perspective even during plays, if desired. The field looks great, though players are elongated, especially in long shots Coach mode play-result animations are a bit stop-and-go on a 386

The adjustable statistics and ratings





give **Coaches Club** superb flexibility while maintaining user-friendliness. Customizing an individual player or whole team couldn't be a much simpler or logical process.

Front Page Sports Football Pro

Patrick Cook, designer and director of the award-winning 1992 **Front Page Football** does even better the second time around with **Front Page Sports Football Pro** (Dynamix).

One or more coaches can play an exhibition, conduct an all-star game or participate in a league. Gamers can stick to coaching or direct the team on the field with keyboard or joystick.

The crucial enhancement is the addition of real teams and players. No statistical simulation can hope to be taken seriously without that solid anchor in reality. Each athlete is rated in many performance areas, so even linemen and defensive backs have the expected capabilities.

Football Pro explores the construction of offensive and defensive plays in microscopic detail The Practice Mode and Tutorial Mode are very helpful to those who want to master this phase of the game.

This is not just a game for gridiron experts, though **Football Pro** has a Quickstart feature that goes right from boot to a Bills-Cowboys solitaire game without any detours. Pat Cook has thoughtfully made Quickstart programmable, so that **Football Pro** jumps right to the computerist's favorite type of game without the need to laboriously reset all the parameters.

The graphics are crisper and the players now execute more sophisticated on-field moves, like spins and flips. The overhead display shows the largest improvement among the six basic perspectives. Few will use this mode for more than a brief look at the overall situation, but it's still nice to see the upgrade

Don't let ownership of the original stop you from trying the sequel Cook has bolstered the program in so many ways that it's a dream-come-true for those who loved the previous one

NFL Pro League Football

This extensively retooled version of the 1992 title maximizes those virtues and adds some new ones. Dave Holt and his co-designers (Alan Stephenson Brent Johnson and Paul Immekus) have reworked the interface added lots of new features, and improved the graphics.

The selection of teams in **NFL Pro League** puts all other football games to shame. Coaches pick from among the five most recent complete seasons with full rosters for every club. This gives the flexibility for such intriguing simulations as matching different years of the same franchise or conference champs from separate seasons.

The game offers solitaire in-person head-to-head and real-time modem play As coach, you have the ability to call each play as situations unfold or prepare a strategy template that automatically sends in preselected offensive and

Football Pro includes a player drafting system, enhancing roster realism.

defensive maneuvers.

Leaguers will appreciate the utilities for starting, running, and statistically monitoring a season. The program can handle four separate leagues and can present a host of team and individual stats for any of them. The League Mode works with stock and drafted teams, and it offers a choice of schedule configurations, including one expressly for the league

Just Wait 'Til Next Year!

The complexity of football made simulations hard to produce until recent years. Powerful microprocessors and multimedia have blown the roof off technology Football gamers are among the beneficiaries. Graphics are ready to leap to a new higher standard Designers are getting better at dissecting the sports so that it can be properly quantified

Super Bowl 1994 will make All-Pro?

Bubsy's Back... and He's Lost His Marbles!

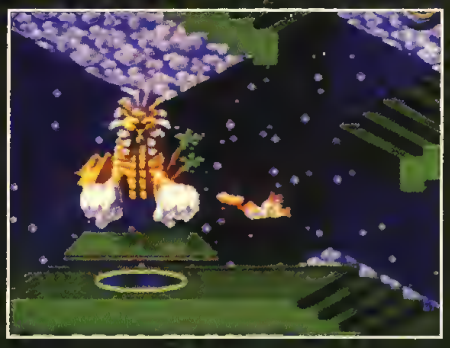
A Bobcat for All Seasons Takes the Fall

by Bill Kunkel

Bubsy II, coming soon from John Skeel and Team Bubsy, introduces the game world to several characters originally seen on Bubsy's syndicated Thanksgiving special, including his reluctant sidekick Arnold Dillo, inventor Virgil Reality and the inevitable Bubsy Twins, a pair of interchangeable miniature versions of our self-involved star. Also on hand is the greedy Oinker P. Spamm, the villain of the piece and an incredible collection of bit players.

Holiday cheer is in the air, but Bubsy and his pals have a big job to do!

The story begins with Bubsy, Arnold and the Twins excited over the prospect of visiting the world's latest and greatest amusement park, the Amazatorium, a fantastic playground supposedly produced through the wonders of simulated reality.



Yow! Everybody's favorite furry friend has to watch his step or pay the price!

But since the Twins realize that the park will be impossibly crowded on opening day, they trick their Uncle Bubs into taking them the day *before* it opens. After all, one might ask, what could possibly go wrong?

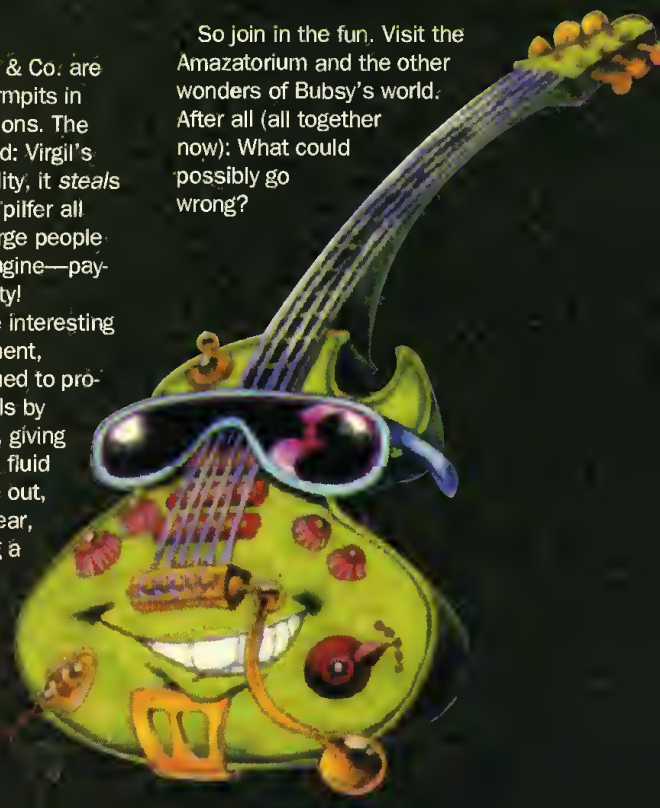
The Amazatorium is the result of a partnership between scientist Virgil Reality and capitalist swine Oinker Spamm. Virgil, it seems, has invented a process dubbed WOMPUM (World Origination and Matter Projection Unification Machine) and Oinker has bought in, creating a media blitz that would have made P. T. Barnum blush. Matter of fact, the hype is so ubiquitous that people fail to notice what would otherwise be considered significant events, such as the disappearance of several ancient artifacts as well as anything ever written about the history of the River Nile. Things soon get even stranger, as knowledge of the Wright Brothers' existence evaporates and people forget that airplanes work.

Once inside the park, Bubsy & Co. are quickly up to their animated armpits in Oinker's mysterious machinations. The perfidious plot is soon revealed: Virgil's machine doesn't simulate reality, it *steals* it—and Oinker has decided to pilfer all reality, whereupon he can charge people enormous sums to visit it. Imagine—paying money to escape *into* reality!

The game itself offers some interesting changes from the first installment, although Accolade has continued to produce the original animation cels by hand rather than on computer, giving the characters a more natural, fluid sense of movement. This time out, however, the action is less linear, with Bubsy able to move along a scrolling master screen from which he can access several different locations. Bubsy flies a biplane, goes deep sea diving, plays pirate and experiences a delightful range of experiences and exotic locales. And on the Genesis, the game will be produced in the Hi-res Mode, which also gives the characters a somewhat different look. Finally, the yarn balls from the original are gone, replaced by a series of beautifully colored marbles.

The game contains humorous animated sequences that lend a personal touch.

So join in the fun. Visit the Amazatorium and the other wonders of Bubsy's world. After all (all together now): What could possibly go wrong?



Build an insanely over-priced sports car. drive it as fast as possible. And laugh in the face of authority.

{Just don't cry when you're sharing a cell with a big fat guy who picks his nose.}

EUROPEAN RACERS

The game has tons of cool video clips just like this one. Only different.

Break all kinds of laws in one of four European Racers. Integrated video clips give tips on equipment and weather conditions while you try to outrun the cops and race on four different tracks. 3-D animated instructions help you build a model of your car so you can remember what it looks like after you wrap it around a guard rail. Available for IBM on CD-ROM and Sega CD.™

The model makes the game better. The game makes the model better.™

A Hero For the Nineties

EG Previews Super Alfred Chicken

by John Hardin

Captain America, Superman, The Silver Surfer, Batman—proud warriors who have left a legacy of virtue and righteousness for others to emulate. In that heroic tradition, another joins these warriors and he is...Super Alfred Chicken.

With tongue planted firmly in cheek, the folks at Mindscape introduced a platform hero for the nineties; a feathered avenger whom they hope will bring them truth, justice and name brand recognition on the scale of Sonic or Bubsy.

Super Alfred Chicken for SNES is almost too cute to live, what with its chicken hero, smiling flowers, wind-up mice and pastel colors. Everything is anthropomorphic: switches, doors, traps, bombs, everything. Fortunately, interesting game play and an acknowledged level of silliness keep this lighthearted game from succumbing to cutesiness.

Here's the plot: One day while testing out his new Super Spy Radio, Alfred's flowery friend Mr. Pekles stumbled upon a secret Meka Chicken broadcast

Alfred Chicken has quite a tall order in front of him. Can he save the day?

Alfred's conquests of separate stages are rewarded with colorful animations.

detailing how the Meka Chickens had kidnapped all of the eggs and were going to clone them into an Invincible Super Meka Chicken Army. Mr. Pekles summoned Alfred and informed him of the nefarious plottings of the Meka Chickens.

This story is stretched across 21 different levels, each with its own theme. There's the Alphabet Level where the walls and floors are made of alphabet blocks. Then there's the Wood Level, where the floors and walls are made of planks (screws included) and there's the Cheese Level where the walls and floors are...you get the idea.

After every seven levels Alfred Chicken fights a Meka Chicken Boss. Three per game is plenty; these guys are tough. Al must find the Meka Chicken's soft spot and keep dive bombing away until the hard headed thing gives in.

Every few levels, there's a bonus shell game. Players watch as icons for 1, 2, and 3 extra lives are placed under shells. After a quick shuffle, players guess where the 3-Up icon is hidden. Even if players guess wrong, they still get one or two extra lives, so no one is a loser.

There are lots of hidden items and some hidden things that Alfred can't win the game without finding. One way this game differs from others in the genre is

Use the "dive-beaking" technique to destroy enemies and open bonus items.

that when Sonic or Bubsy or Mario lose, the end screen doesn't show the player a dead hedgehog, bobcat or plumber. When the **Super Alfred Chicken** player loses, the Game Over screen shows a cartoon of a nice, juicy, roasted chicken

Floating platforms will assist Alfred as he tries to stop the evil Meka Chickens.

on a platter. There are some sick puppies at Mindscape.

Kids will like the graphics and grownups will like the game play that had the **Mortal Kombat**-loving playtesters at Mindscape sneaking off on their lunch hours to play **Super Alfred Chicken**. The soundtrack features a great tune and the sound effects feature some gems.

Mindscape releases **Super Alfred Chicken** in late January!

THE TERMINATOR™ RAMPAGE

He's back.
He's made a few friends ...
... and they're angry.

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS™

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Electronic

EG unlocks the mysteries of

by Russ Ceccola

Puzzles intrigue players who like to work their brains as hard as their fingers.

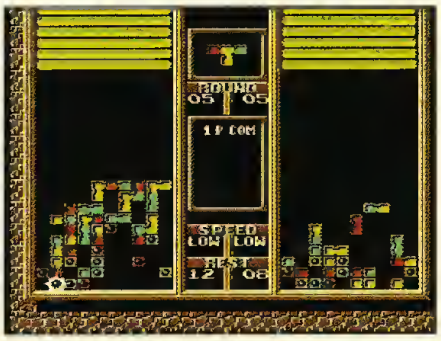
Game addicts don't always turn to arcade or sports programs to satisfy their urge for electronic entertainment. Some puzzle games take on arcade game qualities, while others are pure mindbenders Whichever way the emphasis falls, puzzles continue to be a prime part of the electronic gaming world Here are some of the best of the recent puzzle-heavy products.

The Even More Incredible Machine (Dynamix/IBM) greatly improves upon its older brother with new puzzles and new machine parts. The object is to assemble such items as fans, scissors and boxing gloves into Rube Goldberg-like devices that reach a particular goal, such as releasing a caged animal or putting a ball into a hoop.

The game obeys the laws of physics, but players can alter gravity and air pressure in the Freeform Mode to design their own creations with any of the game's parts. **The Even More Incredible Machine** lets mechanically-inclined individuals assemble contraptions and solve tricky puzzles at the same time.

The Even More Incredible Machine gives players additional mind-benders.

Tetris addicted players all over the world with its simplistic rules and arcade action. **Tetris 2** (Nintendo/NES) was a long time coming, but fans will find it worth the wait. After the original game's release, many independent designers produced shareware and public domain versions of the Russian export that covered just about every conceivable game variation and enhancement. Spectrum Holobyte also expanded the "'Tris" genre with **Faces**, **Hatris**, **WordTris**, **Super Tetris**, **Welltris** and **Tetris Classic**. Now Nintendo has added new game play elements in **Tetris 2** similar to the other incarnations of the popular game. Fortunately, this has been accomplished without making the game overly complicated.



Tetris 2 takes the classic video puzzle game and adds a new Two-player Mode.

Tetris 2's major innovations are new pieces with separated blocks, flash blocks and the basic goal itself The object of **Tetris 2** is NOT to create a line of blocks across the screen in order to eliminate them, but instead to line up three blocks of the same color in a row or column. The separated blocks on some pieces continue to fall after the rest of the piece stops. The flash blocks eliminate all fixed blocks of the same color when they disappear in the one-player game, and act as point-enhancers in the two-player game.

Tetris 2 has more variety than the original and even more opportunities for the player to make mistakes.

Tesserae (Gametek/IBM, Game Gear and Game Boy), pronounced "tess uh ree," takes familiar tile-game play and alters it just enough to make it difficult to solve **Tesserae** involves three basic tile types (square, circle and cross) and their combinations. The goal is to jump tiles checker-style until only one is left. Rules for jumps complicate matters, as do the game s nine board layouts and random initial tile placement. Players only clear a board successfully every now and then, but the attempts become addictive.

Push-Over (Ocean/IBM and Super NES) takes the phrase "domino effect" literally. As everyone knows, dominos fall over in an interesting chain reaction when the pieces are arranged on end to form designs In **Push-Over**, players arrange dominos in a pattern to fall over with a push of a single piece. The colorful graphics and sound effects enhance the puzzle screens, but pieces with unusual physical properties incorporate strategy into the game's levels.

Gear Works (Hollyware/IBM Sony/Imagesoft/Game Gear and Genesis) capitalizes on the skills most youngsters learned from their Erector sets. The basic physics concept is that a gear turns in the opposite direction of a rotating gear that its teeth touch. The object of **Gear Works** is to place gears on a board of pegs so that all of the stationary red gears turn. Creatures called Poffins rust gears and pull pegs so that players have to plan correct gear placement as well as eliminate pesky Poffins with a gun, and fix or remove gears with an oil can or bombs respectively.

Action speeds up quickly so that players more and more often lock up the Gear Works in their attempts to mesh the parts.

Multimedia Marvels

The 7th Guest (Virgin/MPC), despite its reputation as a multimedia horror adventure, is nothing more than a difficult collection of visual puzzles with a spectacular multimedia interface. Players explore the rooms and passageways of a haunted mansion and solve puzzles designed by the house's mad toymaker. The visual effects and sound are excellent, but the puzzles themselves are creative and mind boggling.

Another adventure with overwhelming puzzle play is **Myst** (Broderbund/CD-ROM). Exploration of the strange island and the artifacts and library left by the previous owners will keep puzzle lovers racking their brains for solutions, while they enjoy the fantastic graphics.

Enigmas

the latest puzzle games

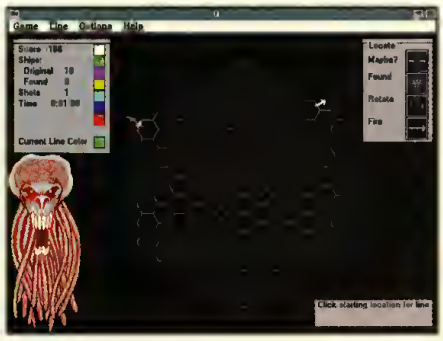
Forever Fun

Older games that deserve mention are: **Columns** (Sega/Game Gear and Genesis) the beautiful and addictive game of arranging blocks, and the Illusions segment of the fascinating and haunting **Heaven & Earth** (Buena Vista/MS-DOS). And don't forget the **Lolo** series (HAL America/NES), **Boxxle/Boxxle II** (FCI/Game Boy), **Gobliiins/ Gobliiins 2** (CoktelVision/Sierra/IBM), **Chip's Challenge** (Atari/Lynx, Epyx/IBM), **Castle/Island of Dr. Brain** (Sierra/IBM), **Are We There Yet?** (Electronic Arts/IBM), **Shanghai II** (Activision/IBM and Super NES), **Ishido** (Accolade/IBM) and the **Lemmings series** (Psygnosis/IBM, Sega/Game Gear, Sunsoft/Genesis and Super NES) with the cutest creatures in any puzzle-based games.

Spindizzy Worlds (ASCII/Super NES) is an old Commodore 64 game that entertains newer players on a more modern system courtesy of ASCII Entertainment Software. The game is a series of levels and worlds in which players guide a spinning top over paths and around obstacles while they try to beat the clock. Gates and other switch-triggered obstacles require lightning-quick strategy It is quite easy to fall off the edge of some of the paths, so players must find a safe speed that allows them to stay on course, beat the clock and explore each level s tricky layout.

Video Cube: Space (Aris Entertainment/MPC) is reminiscent of that popular cube designed by Hungarian Erno Rubik. When players successfully arrange all 16 segments of a picture on a side of the cube, it comes to life as a video clip.There are over 100 full-motion video clips incorporated into the puzzles as rewards. The multimedia twist on a classic puzzle should addict every puzzle nut or innocent bystander who desperately tried to conquer that frequently frustrating plastic invention

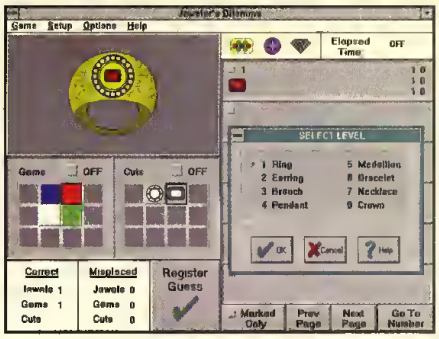
The Game of Q (Star Graphics/MS-DOS) challenges the player to destroy hidden enemy ships by setting up a cannon, dragging it into position, then using lines and beams to set up shots.



Q is a challenging game that requires players to find and destroy enemies.

The player must locate the enemy, then make use of the proton beam and tracer lines to set up the angles of fire. This is not as easy as it sounds, since play is inside a hexagonal grid and the beams bounce wildly around the field It's an interesting combination of strategic combat and puzzle solving.

Gems and jewelry form the basis of **Jeweler's Dilemma** (Cinnabar Softare/MS-DOS) as the gamer struggles to replace lost gems into the crown jewels. From a bank of gems, colors and cuts, the gamer must replace the missing stones. There are literally thousands of combinations, variations, and levels of play This is an exciting and unusual puzzle-form that gains a lot from the mysterious and magical beauty of the gemstones and their settings.



The Jeweller's Dilemma is to return the missing stones to their places.

Getaway, the Windows entertainment 6-pack has a choice of entertainments from cards to dominoes, plus three games to puzzle over **Stuffin the Briefcase** is 63 levels of arranging the contents to fit. **Word Salad** is a find-the-word boggler with 32 intense levels. **Totem** should remind experienced gamers of **Mastermind**, in which the gamer tries to assemble totem poles correctly by logical deduction.

Players get both satisfaction and frustration from puzzle games because they experience the joy after a level s completion as well as the confusion it might take to get there. There s nothing like the thrill of finally getting it right!

So give one a try and see how much fun it is to put that gray matter to work on electronic puzzles.

EG INTERVIEW

Dancing to Zork

An Interview with Eddie Dombrower

by **Bill Kunkel**

The young turks of game design and programming grew up with video games. By the time most of them were born, **Pong** was already a cultural mainstay; and by adolescence, the Atari/Intellivision era was already in full swing.

The folks who created those Atari and Intellivision games came from all walks of life. Take, for example, Eddie Dombrower, who started out to become a ballet dancer before finding himself creating baseball simulations, and who now helms Activision's bold new project, **Return to Zork**.

In the Beginning...

"Back in the old days," Eddie recalls, "I took a degree in math in Claremont at Pomona College, where I also took my first computer classes. At the same time, I was a scholarship student at the Joffrey Ballet in New York." While shuttling between school and dance, Eddie sublet a room from a friend who worked for a computer company. "She had a portable terminal that she would bring home and work by modem. And in the evenings after school, we played [an early computer game called] **Adventure**. That was pretty cool stuff, but I really didn't think much more about it at the time.

"When I got ready to graduate, I received a research grant to study computers and ballet notation. There really was no good way of notating ballet [writing down choreography so that the same ballet can be performed over centuries] and I thought computers might be able to add what had always been missing."

Eddie's journey took him to Europe, where he studied various human animation techniques, and actually involved

a computerized ballet notation system which drew him considerable attention from the dance and computer fields in the early '80s. "It taught me a lot about things like interfaces and animation " he contends "and music and slow level programming in general."

World Series Gets Started

When Eddie returned to the States however he found his native land in the throes of a video game revolution, courtesy of the Atari VCS/2600 and the brand new Mattel Intel ivision. Intrigued he made contact with gaming guru Don Daglow, now honcho at Stormfront Software (creators of the **Tony LaRussa Baseball** series for SSI and EA) and then a leading figure at Mattel. Eddie was hired to work on a basebal game for the Intellivision to update the popular **Major League Baseball**, a one-player, topdown simulation Dombrower's knowledge of human animation coupled with his love of sports made him ideal for the project.

It took slightly more than a year to create **World Series Baseball** for the Intellivision, the first hardball sim to use the realistic, TV-style perspectives now standard in the field. "I've always been very proud of that game," he admits.

WSB was also the genesis of what would eventually become the **Earl Weaver Baseball** series. "**World Series Baseball** was the first baseball simulation based on a physical model of the world, rather than a statistical model or even a pixel model. That was sort of the beginning of that notion for Don and me. The fact that we implemented it and made it work was the beginning of something that turned out to be very good."

Living Dangerously

Soon thereafter, Eddie went to work for Atari. "Atari opened up a division here in Los Angeles, and I went there, originally, to produce Atari titles on the Intellivision." Soon thereafter, the Tramiels purchased Atari. "They didn't even know they *had* an office in L.A.," he recalls with a laugh. "I asked them what they wanted us to do and they said: 'Who are you? And why are we paying you?'"

Before the Fall of Saigon, however, Eddie had the opportunity to do some work with Children's Television Workshop and produced a series of superb, if rarely seen kideo games "It was really a fabulous experience " he recalls. "Unfortunately, before any of them got to market, the Tramiels bought the company and downsized it to the point where, as far as I knew, they eliminated the entire software staff "

Back to the Bases

Eddie quietly retreated to his dance notation project. Simultaneously, however Electronic Arts was making a Big Noise in the computer software biz with **Dr. J and Larry Bird go One-On-One**, and had decided to push ahead on the sports simulation front.

"EA wanted to do a celebrity baseball game," he recalls. "And Don Daglow, who was a producer there at the time, said he knew someone he had already worked with. Don brought me up to meet with EA and that was the beginning of **Earl Weaver Baseball**."

The project was not initially connected with the salty Earl of Baltimore. "We actually worked on the project for eight or nine months before Weaver came aboard. Then we spent another year incorporating him and finishing up the game."

In all, there were six editions of the game: one Amiga, three PC, an Apple II and a Macintosh SKU. "I attempted to grow a little company based on this," Dombrower recalls. "Mirage Graphics, which I started when I left Atari, eventually got up to between eight and 12 people, including [freelancers]. We produced a lot of ports of other products for Software Toolworks, we did the basketball game for Bethesda, and all the **Earl Weaver** stuff."

The Coming of... Zork!

At this point in his career, Dombrower was running the company, programming, doing art direction, etc. But he felt that the sports games weren't sufficiently stretching his skills and interests.

"A couple of things happened. First, the industry started to change, and small companies like ours had to make a change that I wasn't really interested in having my company do," he says, referring to the swallowing up of small-time independents as affiliates to the major labels. "So, I started doing straight design work for EA. I let everyone in my company go. It was fulfilling in some ways, but very lonely in others. So, when I got word that Activision had moved down here [L.A.], I met with the principal players in terms of production,and it turned out that they were looking for someone to come on and produce a story product."

"Want an interview? 'Course ya do!" Eddie had a blast creating the game.

Zorked!

When they told Eddie that they were specifically looking to update the Infocom games, he could have danced with joy. "Although I had never specifically done an adventure game, I have played them for years. And in 1983 my wife, Terry, actually introduced me to **Zork**."

We wondered: was there any trepidation on Activision's part in sinking big bucks into a product which could be perceived by young computerists as their father's role-playing game?

"There was very little concern about that. I think the attitude all along was that **Zork** was a well-known quantity in the gaming world. And while there was a good deal of pressure to do a great job with it, we knew that there was going to

be a small minority group that was going to be unhappy with whatever we did because the game has pictures. So we just sort of assumed that we would be getting hate mail from these people. But we were willing to absorb that risk on the basis that what a lot of people liked about **Zork** were things which we could move into the '90s.

"We have tried to capture the essence of what made **Zork Zork**, such as its eclectic nature, and the fact that you don't know why you're there right away. We tried to capture some of the basic things, keeping the mythology alive."

By the time Eddie came on board, design on **Return to Zork** had already been ongoing for almost half a year under Tom Sloper, working with designer Doug Barnett. The original design, according to Dombrower, "had nothing at all to do with **Zork**. It was a straight-out adventure, it was all above ground. It was completely different from the [ultimate] product, and Tom gave Doug a lot of feedback about the fact that we needed to make it part of the **Zork** world. And that's about the stage where I inherited it. What we did is we broke part of the world underground and rewrote the story to set it 700 years after the other **Zork**s. And it was rediscovered so we didn't have to redraw any of the old **Zork**. To a certain degree, we improvised with what we had to start with. In terms of the actual locations that Doug put in his original design, 90 percent of them are still there, but most of them are now underground. The interactions, and the basic puzzle structure, a lot of that is still there. What we did was rework the story and the way in which the characters knew about **Zork**. What we did was give Doug guidance and suggestions on how to Zorkify his original design.

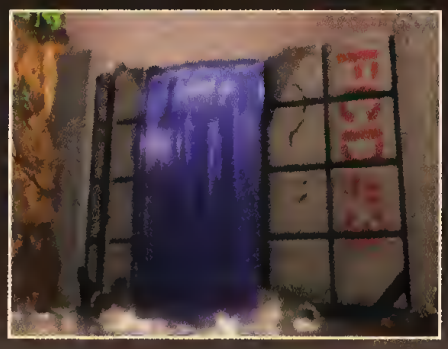
"Then we took the puzzles and, based on feedback that the puzzles in **Leather Goddesses of Phobos** were too simple, we made the puzzles increasingly difficult just by reworking what Doug had already laid out for us."

For inspiration on this project, Eddie looked to the adventure games which he felt had best made the transition to modern technology and design. "I don't think this is any surprise, but my favorite games are the **Monkey Island** games," he admitted. "That sense of humor and the nature of the puzzle structure is something I've always liked."

The decision to go with full-motion video on the CD version of **Return to Zork** was made very early. "The whole reason that we did the production the way we did was in anticipation of producing a CD version that would include FMV clips. Now it goes one step further: since we're doing MPEG versions, we re not producing any new source material. We have it all; we did everything we'd need without ever knowing it.

ReelMagic Invoked!

Return to Zork breaks new technological ground as the point product for the innovative ReelTime sound and video board technology, an MPEG standard card which can generate FMV animation at 30 frames per second, with 320 x 240 resolution and tons of colors to produce 3DO-type color saturation.



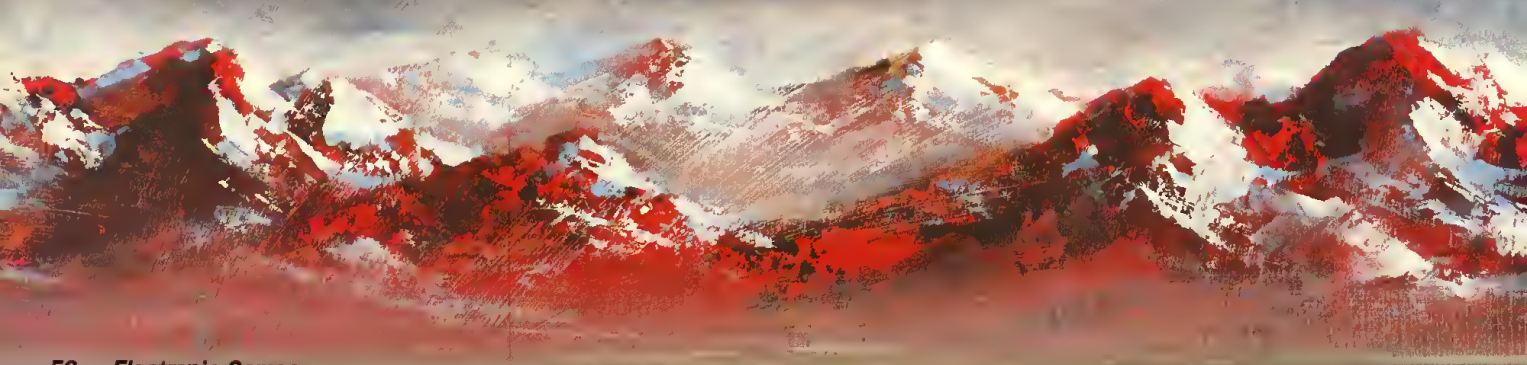
Flood Control Dam is waiting for hardy adventurers to unlock its deep secrets.

"The first time I met with ReelTime was at the Game Developers Conference. They had, meanwhile seen what we had done in **Zork**, and it was clear that this was a good match The actors were already composited in a realm that made sense to MPEG, and the way this game was built, it was designed for this technology. Still we're pushing that board very hard. Sigma's been down here helping us out and we're using everything this board has, including its audio-digital playback and an OPL chip, so it's also playing MIDI music We're pushing the technology."

Eddie believes the ReelMagic board will signal a new era in software development. "When you meet the lighthouse keeper in **Return to Zork**, it's like nothing you've ever seen before," he promised.

The future? "We've already started **Planetfall**. We've hired Steve Maretski and two writers from the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* TV series, Hans Biemler and Richard Manning. We have Floyd in this one and we're just trying to do a better production—we're not looking to create any new technology."

Bill Kunkel



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Software Takes a Dive

Undersea Software Swims into View

by Bill Kunkel

For years, software publishers held fast to the belief that games set extensively underwater would not float. As with most such notions, it had some basis in reality. Plenty of seagoing software has been released in the past dozen years, and very little of it has seen commercial success, regardless of quality.

In fact, undersea adventures have been a tough sell in most media. James Cameron, who hardly seemed able to make an unsuccessful film (*Rambo: First Blood II*, *Aliens* and both *Terminator* films were all his babies), flopped with the big budget movie, *The Abyss*, about a deep sea scientific study group's encounter with morph-happy extraterrestrial life forms. Even the first use of special effects later seen in *T2* couldn't draw audiences to this claustrophobic thriller.

TV fans, meanwhile, are turning off Spielberg's big bucks undersea series, *SeaQuest: DSV*, in record numbers.

The high-profile series, which features Roy Scheider as a waterlogged Capt. Kirk and a chatty porpoise as the obligatory Spock/Data character, started out swimmingly. But each week has seen it plummet nearly a dozen slots in the ratings and *SeaQuest: DSV* may well have had its plug pulled by the time you read this.

Nonetheless, the ongoing search for new arenas to electronically exploit was destined to bring software publishers back to the sea. Three new programs have just surfaced, in fact, using state-of-the-art computer technology to bring the user face to face with the denizens of the deep.

Going Down

Capstone's **Discoveries of the Deep** is an enhanced update of the publisher's earlier program **Search for the Titanic** (which also appeared as part of Capstone's **CD Game Collection**). The original game used actual digitized footage from the real quest to locate the long-lost luxury vessel, along with extensive charts, electronic tracking equipment, and even mini-subs to heighten realism.

Discoveries provides much-improved bit-mapped graphics to support the digitized undersea FMV. The game is based around the world famous Manatee Harbor Oceanographic Institute in Miami, a research facility created in 1977. The player is cast as a Manatee research trainee with a specialty in manned submersible craft such as the Manta, a "cutting edge mini-sub utilizing the latest advances in ceramic hull design."

Discoveries of the Deep features many realistic scenes of diving sequences.

This baby is fully equipped, right down to its Waldo-style robotic arm, and can carry a three-person working crew as deep as 35,000 feet.

Once the gamers arrive at Manatee, they select a mission from a menu of seven scenarios. Users can go looking for the Titanic; search the sea bottom for remnants of Flight 19, a WWII bomber plane that went down in the Bermuda Triangle; explore the 32,000-foot-deep Romanche Gap, third deepest point in the Atlantic; seek out the wreckage of the Spanish galleon Capitana which sank in 1733; help the Navy perform a nuclear waste dump; find the remains of Columbia Airlines Flight 609, which took off from New York's LaGuardia Airport bound for London, but never got there; or even explore one of natures true oddities, a vast undersea cavern known as a blue hole, which was originally created by fresh water but has long since been filled in by the sea.

The game offers a variety of fascinating options, including choice of ship. Players can take either the *Matacumbe* or the *Voyager*, identical craft but for the design of the pilot-house. The pilot-house

screen is the primary display for navigating to the mission location, with everything from the throttle to the foghorn accessible to the gamer. From the pilothouse, the player can visit the instrument room which contains a navigational map, plotter, Sonar-Magnetometer, depth sounder and other neat devices. There's even a rec room where silicon sailors can relax with a game of darts or drop a token in the tank simulator coin-op.

Once the mission destination is reached, the player can board the mini-sub and get down to some real underwater exploration. **Discoveries of the Deep** is a rich, well-designed product that offers users a genuine sense of what subsea searches actually entail.

Do You See What I Sea?

Undersea Adventure, meanwhile, from Knowledge

Adventure, puts a more overtly educational spin on the subject, but the product itself is no less entertaining. This program uses the more familiar database-style approach found in software such as Compton's **Wild Learning Safari**, National Geographic's **Mammals** and Knowledge Adventure's own **Kid's Zoo**.

Players select from among numerous appealing options, including viewing a movie in striking, full-color FMV; quizzes; a global map which shows everything from how waves are created to the development of global weather cycles; a Seacology Lab; four oceanographic cruises; and a 3-D VR-style program which allows the user to swim around inside a "virtual" aquarium.

The graphics, animation and FMV are all extremely sharp, but the game runs better in DOS than in the Windows format. The four cruises mentioned above include an eye-popping tour of coral reefs; an up-close adventure through shark-infested waters; a look at marine mammals, and a symbiotic session with what are dubbed the "sea's oddest couples".

Undersea Adventure blends a user-friendly interface, great sound and graphics; and several great simulated experiences to create a first-rate look at what goes on under the waves.

Virtual SCUBA

Purely in terms of graphic excellence, it would be tough to top the sharp-edged color visuals found in Amazing Media's **Oceans Below** (Software Toolworks) for Macintosh CD-ROM. Put on that diving mask (make sure you spit in it first—all we diver types do it, it's cool), set the oxygen flow, check pressure, and fall backward into the warm, engulfing, womblike waters of the Caribbean. Or check out what's happening off the California Coast, under the Red Sea, down Hawaii way, in the South Pacific, the Australian coast, or the Sea of Cortez. You can even check out the waters off the Galapagos, the land that evolution forgot.

The virtual underwater environment is simply breathtaking, with an intuitive command system that allows the user to swim freely through the 200 FMV segments, view 125+ photos, explore plane and ship wrecks and even search for one of the 68 sunken treasures scattered about the program.

Oceans Below contains live-action video of dive preparation and exploration.

Oceans Below marks one of the most creative and rewarding uses yet of CD-based software technology. The program is crammed with audio and visual delights, rendered in multi-color graphics so crisp you'll wonder why your ears aren't popping.

These programs offer users exactly what the best computer simulations have always presented: an opportunity to experience something that otherwise—for reasons ranging from expense to danger to simple inconvenience—might not be possible in the real world. Whether that experience is soaring through the clouds or exploring under the sea, it is something to be cherished.

So put on that wet suit, and jump in. The water's fine!

— Bill Kunkel

BETHESDA EXPLORES THE FUTURE

EG examines science fiction games now in development.

by Russ Ceccola

Bethesda Softworks has been producing computer games for over seven years now For most of those years its most popular games have been sports titles, most notably **Wayne Gretzky Hockey**, Bethesda s most successful sports game. Most recently, **The Terminator: 2029** and its add-on disk earned new fans for the company.

At the end of 1993, Bethesda entered a new genré, role-playing games (RPGs), with **The Elder Scrolls: Arena**. This, along with **The Terminator: Rampage**, **Delta V** and **Sword of Sodan**, firmly establishes Bethesda as a multi- faceted company with a strong presence in the science fiction and fantasy segments of the game industry.

Sword of Sodan was one of the best-selling games for the Amiga at the heighth of that system's popularity. It was designed by a programmer from Denmark and imported to America by a small company, Discovery Software. Electronic Arts later released an updated Genesis version.

Bethesda introduced **Sword of Sodan** for the Macintosh as an experiment. Company president Christopher Weaver explained that "we're curious to see how the Macintosh game market supports good games."

Sword of Sodan is the right kind of product with which to test the waters. It uses the talents of the same Danish designers as the original version, in a side-scrolling action game in which players move a male or female warrior through various screens and eliminate enemies and monsters with their sword-wielding abilities

The Terminator· Rampage and **Delta V** are high-speed, exciting action games that show off many of the neat tools in Bethesda s ibrary of special effects and programming tricks. **Rampage** will appeal to fans of such games as **Shadow Caster** and **Wolfenstein 3-D**, while **Delta V** goes after the flight simulation players

There are some special effects in common with both games, as well as unique elements more appropriate for the game play. For example, **Rampage** uses Bethesda's excellent 3-D engine and high-speed animation tools, while **Delta V** relies on polygon graphics and Goreaud shading.

A rather unique aspect of these games and **TES: Arena** is that they all have the same designer and producer. VJ Lakshman helmed all three projects and imparted the same degree of fun, creativity and excitement to each. Many of the team members worked on all three projects as well.

Rampage takes players of **The Terminator: 2029** back to mankind's present in the midst of an all-out war with the machines sent by the Skynet supercomputer to wipe out humanity. Players take the role of a resistance soldier from **2029** who must escape into the past and make his way through level after level of increasing difficulty in an effort to beat the cyborgs at their own game. The machines get tougher and their numbers increase as the game advances. The finale involves a metal behemoth that many players may never see because of the large, but fair, buildup in difficulty through the levels.

Rampage uses a variety of audio tricks and graphics techniques to bring the story to life. Each of the game's 32 levels presents players with a different layout, new enemies and special challenges. Action game fans will jump right into the game since it is basically a 3-D shoot-em-up in which the biggest decisions players have to make are which weapon to choose and which way to go.

Jump into the world of Skynet as the humans try to end the machine's reign.

Fiery explosions and smooth, scrolling backgrounds enhance the experience.

Rampage's design team made sure that every aspect of the game enhances the game play. The 3-D engine uses flight simulator technology as players make their way through the game. Movements are smooth and fast at 30 frames per second. Light-sourcing effects make the shadows just as dangerous as the pools of light from overhead fluorescent bulbs and panel lighting. The soldier's arms and game's guns are digitized and overlaid onto the first-person perspective 3-D view. All weapons except the game's most powerful one are real.

This perspective and the fact that the game takes up the entire screen work well together to develop that sense of "you are there" reality. The intense music mirrors the game play and changes as players get close to enemy robots. **Rampage** also features sound effects galore, from the very subtle machine sounds when they go offline to the more obvious gun sounds. The sound effects, music and visual treats combine for an exciting experience worthy of the name "Terminator" on the package.

TES: Arena is the largest project Bethesda has ever attempted Bethesda's approach to the game design was the most important aspect of the process. Rather than start from scratch and attempt to create their own game system, Lakshman and the design team took a good look at existing RPGs and designed **TES: Arena** based on their favorite aspects of those games. "We looked around very carefully at the last 10 years of role-playing games and tried

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BETHESDA EXPLORES THE FUTURE

to distill what makes a game successful in the genré. By examining all of those elements, we've synthesized a game that's much stronger " Weaver said. Lakshman remarked that they wanted to "bring back serious fun into what people call role-playing."

A few minutes with **TES: Arena** will convert even the most dedicated fans of other RPG systems. The entirety of the single-player game uses a first-person perspective 3-D view, both indoors and outside in the wilderness.

The environment is vast, with over 8 mi ion square kilometers to explore. The nine provinces of the game's continent contain about 51 cities, towns or dungeon areas. Over 500 pages of text, 2500 magic items and hundreds of weapons and characters illustrate the depth and variety in the game.

An interesting graphical interface gives players a fresh adventuring prespective.

Bethesda invested over 9 man-years in the project, an amount of time clearly obvious in the way that the game's elements seem to mesh perfectly.

Although much of **TES: Arena**'s mechanics may be familiar to genré fans, Bethesda added a few unique aspects to

The Elder Scrolls: Arena introduces rewarding but dangerous quests.

the product. The character generation process involves a series of 10 moral questions from a pool of 150 that sway a character toward magic user, warrior or thief. Assistant Designer Ted Peterson wrote the prose for **TES: Arena**, a text document of book size that tells a good story and also covers the gamut of responses to user actions. Players can name and design their own spells with visual effects and amount of damage with the intuitive Spellmaker system as well as use the magic items and spells they discover in the game. Even combat takes on a unique feel in **TES: Arena** because the on-screen weapon's movements respond directly to the mouse controls.

Many special effects from Bethesda's growing toolbox will impress adventurers as they wander through **TES: Arena.** Subtle effects like darkness and sunrise occur realistically. Weather effects help define certain towns and areas. Programmer Julian LeFay added mist, fog and rain that come across as incredibly real. Light sources also reveal what players would expect. Sound effects like monster growls, birds and footsteps accompany the impressive sound track to entertain the ears as well as the mind and eyes.

There are simply too many elements of **TES: Arena** to discuss here, but the simple mouse-driven interface and attention on fun and quests will draw players in for hundreds of hours of fun. Weaver said, "We've tried to create a game that's vast, fun and interesting and requires you to think." Bethesda certainly succeeded in that goal Their winning RPG combines, as Lakshman revealed "a good story a real world and the fun of Dungeons and Dragons."

Delta V explores the flight simulation genré to fully round out Bethesda s recent game lineup. **Delta V** a play on words of the symbol for acceleration) puts players in control of a virtual reality vehicle that represents the defense mechanism for a computer network with the invading computer signals as enemy ships. The player's ship speeds along at 30 frames-per-second through the trenches of the game's levels. Players can upgrade their vehicles after successful "netruns," but that doesn't make the game any easier.

Flying through futuristic channels and blasting your foes awaits in Delta V.

Delta V's strong points are its amazing speed, detailed graphics achieved through polygon modeling and Goreaud shading and the exceptional background graphics and sound effects. **Delta V** is another winner in Bethesda's new vision

In its latest group of games, Bethesda has demonstrated the same level of experience and dedication to fun that the company instilled in its past sports products. This is a time in the company's development when it is able to use all of the tools it has worked so hard to develop in bits and pieces over the years.

Weaver perfectly summed up this progression when he posed the question "What software company has ever achieved their desired level of quality but by degrees? We will strive to become a leading software company and the consumers will benefit from the process."

The real beneficiaries of al this work will be the players, who wil experience the results of the Maryland-based company's recent forays into science fiction and fantasy With strong dedication to quality programming and testing, Bethesda Softworks is shaping up to be a premiere producer of software titles.

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Chess for

EG Examines the Latest Crop of Computer Chess Programs

Because of the inherent mathematical basis of chess, it was one of the first conventional games to be ported over in the early days of personal computing. Many of these first programs were derivatives of more capable cods residing in university mainframes around the country. Because they had to function in grossly smaller memory environments, like 64 or 256k, the first programs hardly resembled their ancestors, and could usually be bested by knowledgeable players.

In the ensuing years, chess programs and the hardware they reside in have evolved considerably. The days when mediocre players could defeat the average program a respectable percentage of the time are long gone.

Further, playing the high end programs is often a humbling experience even for amateur tournament players. Why play when destined to lose? Because it is impossible to do so without learning something from it. Conversely, nothing is learned by defeating a consistently inferior opponent.

Mastering chess requires years of dedication. Those pursuing this quest constantly seek challenging opposition. Fortunately, three major new programs are here to provide it: **Socrates**, from Machiavelli Designs, **Kasparov's Gambit** from Electronic Arts and **ChessMaster 4000 Turbo** from Software Toolworks.

Socrates 3.0 is not for the faint of heart or the easily discouraged. It offers the most sophisticated chess engine available for the home market, albeit at a corresponding price point of $129.99. At roughly twice the cost of similar, though not comparable titles, **Socrates 3.0** is targeted directly at the dedicated high end chess enthusiast, as opposed to the occasional player.

These players will find a number of features that aid in developing strong openings and play. An optional search display shows what **Socrates** is thinking for each move. A Setup Mode provides for the creation and study of specific chess problems. Also, games may be saved for post play analysis, annotated comments and position evaluation, all of which aid in the discovery of missed opportunities and alternative approaches. For those who do relish the chance to win once in a while, an optional handicapping feature allows the user to change the following settings: the USCF rating level that Socrates will play at (handy to prepare for tournaments against ranked players), the average time per move, the fixed time per move, a maximum search depth from the internal library and the total time per game.

The **Socrates** engine has garnered

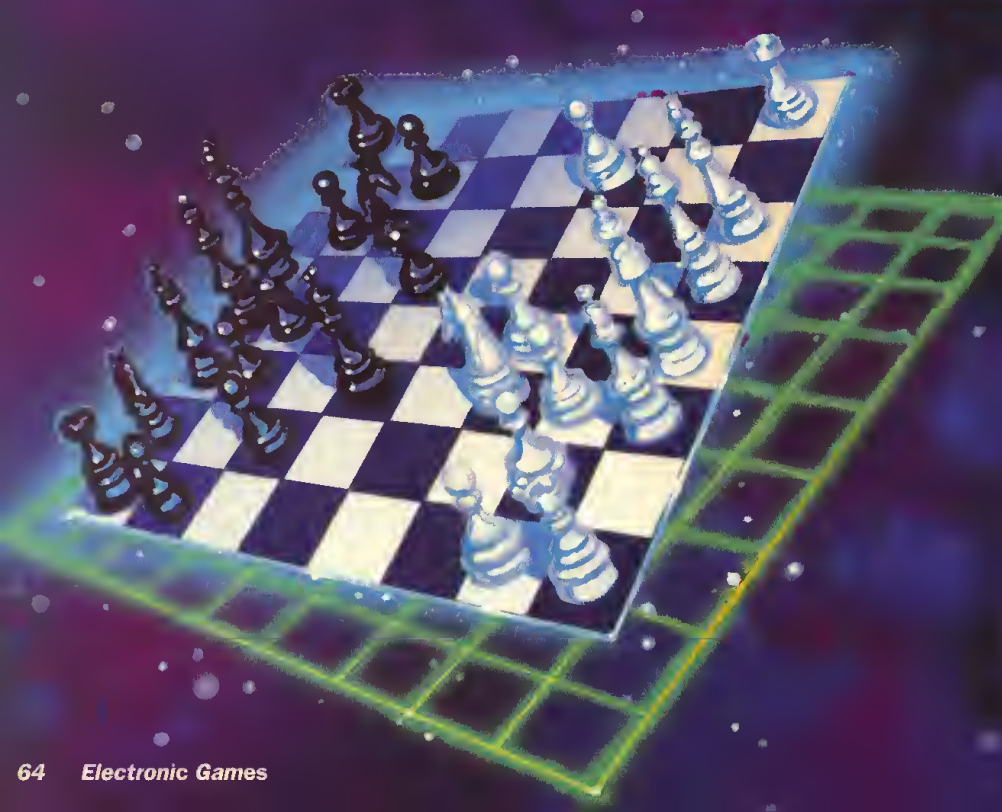
Socrates 3.0 is considered by many to have the best chess engine around.

quite a reputation over 15 years of development and international competition. In the third Harvard Cup, which was a "Man vs. Machine" Tournament, the 1.0 version of **Socrates** succeeded in defeating three human Grand Masters in five games, including the reigning U.S. Chess Champion and the World Blitz Chess Champion. This established **Socrates** as the first, and so far the only, program or machine to achieve a plus score against human Grand Masters in an established tournament.

Socrates 2.0 won the 1993 23rd Annual International Computer Chess Championship, defeating a Cray Supercomputer and many other dedicated chess machines, including the MIT entry. Further, it accomplished this feat without dedicated hardware, operating on an unmodified 486/50 PC. Of the top six finishers, **Socrates** was the only one that could be purchased off the shelf for play on home computers.

Observant readers of packaging might notice that **Kasparov's Gambit** claims the same honor on the back of its box. This is not misleading or a misprint. **Kasparov**'s engine is **Socrates 2.0**, properly licensed from Machiavelli and jazzed up with additional features and graphics. Given the established credentials of this engine, and the fact that it may be had for half the price of its descendant ($59.95), **Kasparov's Gambit** is a more palatable purchase for those players who view chess as more of a game than a lifestyle.

Kasparov's Gambit includes all of the essential features that players have



come to expect: extensive tutorials, a running game analysis, 2-D and 3-D boards, tournament play and a rating system. In addition, it boasts a library of 500 of history's most famous matches and a battery of illustrative quizzes.

Kasparov's quizzes and tutorials emphasize the four important abilities possessed by top players: memorization, visualization, creativity and pattern recognition. Rather than taking mid-game positions out of context, as some programs do, and presenting them to the player for solution, the **Gambit** coach pops up in the course of a game in progress to prompt players for their best move in the situation and critiques their response. Online help is available if desired, and the coaching feature can be toggled off if preferred.

The outcome of a game is often determined in the opening sequence. In recognition of this, **Kasparov's Gambit** includes several "books" of opening moves to draw from.

For quick reference, these online databases are segregated by style. There is a basic starter book designed for novices, an aggressive book for more skilled players who seek a quick kill, a book of best tournament openings and two theoretically based books. The latter include Classic and Hypermodern positions and strategies. For the uninitiated, hypermodernism is the antithesis of classical chess, emphasizing operations on the flanks of the board as opposed to

World champ Gary Kasparov offers insightful advice during intense games.

Power Players

control of the center.

For those who wish to focus on the style of a particular Grand Master, the

Chessmaster 4000 Turbo certainly does not lack in the area of special settings.

reference library of famous games focuses on 16 of the best players in history, including over 100 matches by Mr. Kasparov. This feature permits club and tournament players who know the playing style their opponents favor to conduct an unlimited number of practice games against that style. Concurrently, those with a purely academic interest can discern a great deal about the thought processes of the world's best players by delving deeply into this section. All of these features combined make **Kasparov's Gambit** an exceptional bargain.

The third offering in this comparison, Software Toolworks' **Chessmaster 4000 Turbo**, is equally competitive in terms of price ($59.95) and play value, but also offers some features the others do not. First, it is a pure Windows product, although the others can be run in the Windows DOS area if one has sufficient memory. Next, the **Chessmaster** offers modem and networking play, which will appeal to those players who seek human opposition but are not in a position to sit across the table from someone. One other nice addition is the ability to play multiple games via a "Simultaneous Exhibition" feature. Finally, the 4000 has more "bells and whistles" for those who appreciate aesthetics.

The SVGA display and options are quite impressive. Users choose from a dozen chess sets including Staunton, Chinese and Napoleon, or they may opt to design their own. 2-D and 3-D displays

Interview with John Grese

John Grese was the 1973 U.S. Chess Champion, narrowly missing a repeat title in 1975, when he tied for third place. He currently holds an International Master ranking and remains active in the sport.

EG: How would you rank the three products (reviewed here)?
JG: In terms of playing strength, **Socrates 3.0** is the strongest by far. If you are looking for a strong opponent, one that will literally blow you off the board, then there really is no comparison. Behind that, I would have to go with the **Chessmaster 4000**. Software Toolworks has really made a significant amount of improvements to that engine over the **3000**.
EG: The U.S. Chess Federation has stopped ranking computer chess algorithms, which used to provide a standard of comparison. What can players turn to now as a source of such evaluations?
JG: There is a Swedish organization which works in conjunction with the International Chess Federation that still does it, but a lot of programs wouldn't be included in their listing unless they competed internationally. Just for comparisons sake, the average Grand Master is ranked at about 2500. I would give **Socrates** an equivalent ranking, the Software Toolworks game around 2400 and **Kasparov's Gambit** just below it.
EG: Since you broached the subject of graphics and other features, what were your impressions of the programs other than the play strength?
JG: Both **Kasparov's Gambit** and the **Chessmaster 4000** have very nice graphics and excellent teaching features, more so than **Socrates**, although I understand Machiavelli will incorporate more of the latter in their next version. The **Chessmaster 4000** is a slightly better teacher because it talks back to the player in English, which provides immediate feedback.
EG: Speaking of the three engines in general, at what point do the limitations of the machine the game is being played on impact the actual performance of the program?
JG: It only becomes a factor when playing timed games with only a short period between moves, say fifteen seconds. Within that time limit, for example, a 486 DX2 66 can examine many more combinations than a 286 16Mhz before being forced to select a move.
EG: Are you using any of these programs to aid your analysis of the Kasparov-Short match?
JG: Yes, Socrates, and it's doing quite well actually. What I am doing is inputting key positions from the match and allowing **Socrates** to resolve them.
EG would like to thank John Grese for assisting with this article.

— Ed Dille

are possible, and the latter has selectable viewing angles and perspective. Sound support has also increased over prior releases in this series, with MIDI music and digitized play commentaries from the opponents.

Rather than opting for an abstract, though accurate, method of handicapping like the USCF ratings, the system allows players to choose opponents from an extensive library of "personalities." These routines combine skill level with various playing styles to create true AI individuals. Comparatively, the abilities of these opponents range from that of newcomers to past Grand Masters. Further, if the player seeks a specific objective, it is also possible to design an opponent by customizing parameters like control of center, contempt for draw and the importance afforded mobility.

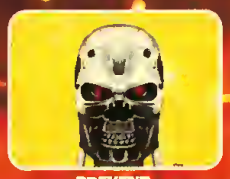
Chessmaster 4000 Turbo adds extra features to an already great engine.

The Chessmaster engine has been greatly improved over the 3000 model as well, garnering its own tournament victory at the 1992 World Computer Chess Championship in Madrid. The similarities don't end there either. Like **Kasparov's Gambit**, a library of 500 of the greatest games is available for study. Also, as before, another feature automatically annotates previously played games for later analysis. In the aggregate, the **Chessmaster 4000 Turbo** is a quantum leap forward for an already established best-selling series.

Collectively, these programs represent the best of the best at supporting the needs of chess players. Because various player's needs differ, there is no manner of arbitrarily choosing between them in a forum such as this. One aspect of any given program, such as modem play in the case of the **Chessmaster 4000 Turbo**, may be crucial to one player and insignificant to another. Regardless of that decision, one thing is certain; there isn't a loser in the lot.

— Ed Dille

KICK SOME LIQUID METAL BUTT!



PREVENT JUDGMENT DAY

I NEED YOUR MOTORCYCLE

PROTECT JOHN CONNOR

OBJECTIVE: RESCUE SARAH CONNOR

DESTROY CYBEROYNE RESEARCH

HASTA LA VISTA, BABY!

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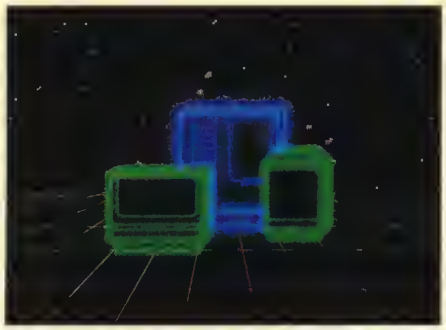


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Eternal Champions

PUBLISHER	Sega
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Fighting
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1 or 2
LEVELS	N/A

Throughout the ages, the balance between good and evil light and darkness, hope and despair has grown thin And through an evi twist of fate, the world as we know it will soon cease to exist. Nine magnificent ndividuals throughout time individuals who could have preserved the peace, had their ives cut short before their purpose could be fulfi led

The Eternal Champion has devoted his existence to harnessing his power so as to hold a tournament challenging these nine worthy opponents against each other, with the goal of restoring the champion s life back a few brief moments before his or her untimely demise Only then can the chosen ones serve their purpose in life and thwart the world s impending doom

A plethora of options await the player brave enough to enter this monumental contest. As a single player enter the Tournament, practice in the Training Mode and/or adjust time mit, Inner Strength controller configuration, and character ski levels. With Inner Strength on the player must judge wisely as to where and when to perform a special move for attacks performed consume strength, and a player must resort to simple punches and kicks while waiting for a depleted Orb to replenish This option cannot be turned off in a single player Tournament Fight—the major drawback of **Eternal Champions**.

The battle truly blazes when a comrade gets in on the fun for a Round-A-Bout, Single Elimination or Double Elimination slugfest. With the choice of Battle Backgrounds Speed or entrance nto the somewhat frivolous Battle Room where players customize their own mechanized menaces, the variables are seemingly endless and a guaranteed source for wholesome family entertainment.

The nine unique fighters at the player's disposal incorporate various martial arts styles ranging from basic Pain (the choice of Slash a prehistoric hunter/gatherer) to the flamboyant but highly refined French art of foot and hand fighting practiced by Jetta Maxx, a 19th century circus acrobat.

High-flying moves and new attacks abound in the latest Sega fighting cart.

In addition to three kicks and three punches varying in degrees of strength, each character is capable of numerous special attacks and defenses ranging from Trident's Spinning Blade to Mid-knight's hypnotic Bedazzle Flee to safety with Larcen's Ceiling Crawl or launch Blade s Projectile Containment Field

Although overly dithered in parts visually **Eternal Champions** delivers. Utilizing a relatively extensive color palette, Sega succeeded in creating a fairly realistic playing environment, at least in comparison to more cartoonish efforts such as in **Street Fighter II** Additionally smooth character animations and well done winning and losing sequences are featured.

The audio portion of **Eternal Champions** falls somewhere between average and good Generally generic background tracks are interrupted by several catchy tunes, such as the opening theme and Larcen s 1920s Chicago-era score With characters having the ability to taunt their opponents with an insult in digitized speech the effort of Sega s behalf is certainly there but the end result leaves something to be desired The shouts are generally understandable, with the exception of Larcen s and Trident's name calling, which quickly grates on the nerves Distinctive sound effects accompany every attack and defense with Blade s Stun Beam and Trident's Liquid Mode of particular note

Character control is tight and responsive with no apparent delay between the player's command and the character's reaction Virtually every special move can be performed with ease although the purchase of a six-button arcade pad or Activator comes highly recommended as the dreaded punch/kick button toggle becomes a necessity for the deprived original three-button pad player Adjustable levels of difficulty and an array of customizable options caters to every player's ski l, from the fighting neophyte to the hardened knuckle-buster

Where this cart soars is in its record-breaking, all important fun factor Whether tackling enemies all by your lonesome or matching up against a friend the game remains a blast to play, with special attacks to master new ones to discover, and peace to secure

Great graphics, catchy sound ready control and loads upon loads of fun all come together for an unequivocal recommendation to the fighting fan and non-fighting fan alike: **Eternal Champions**!

— Sean Pettibone

COMPLEXITY	Intricate
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	89%
PLAYABILITY	90%
REPLAYABILITY	96%

OVERALL 91%

Supernova

PUBLISHER	Taito
SYSTEM	SNES

THEME	Shooter
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	15

"Warning!!" exclaims the manual "Prepare for the fight of your life!"

Okay it's another side-scrolling shooter, with the player controlling a single ship and enemies of all sorts attacking from all angles, while the ship threads a variety of dangerous environments.

The game play's a descendent of **Cosmic Avenger** by way of **Galaxian**, with a little **Asteroids** thrown in for flavor The graphics, however are today's far cry from those seminal twitchers, and as the warning suggests, the onslaught is fast and furious.

A plethora of enemies await hardy pilots, as well as tough navigation.

There is a rather long introduction a minimally animated précis of the setup story (wholly irrelevant to actual game play) told in the manual The tale will sound unspecifically familiar to aficionados of Japanese animated adventure cartoon series. Suffice it to say that it involves the return bent on conquest, of an inimical alien force that humans had once rebuffed, but so long ago that mankind has forgotten how to fight, except for one elite corps, the Silver Hawk Fleet. These scenes are followed by four demo sequences that rotate in turns after repetitions of the intro, if the controller continues to be left alone after the game s turned on The accompanying music is properly portentous.

There are a variety of play options, including three levels of difficulty· Easy Normal and Hard. The default is Normal but start with Easy, it isn't, but it is probably the best way to stick around while learning attack patterns. Other options include the number of Silver Hawk fighter craft the player starts with (it's called Player Stock), Auto Shot (select between continuous automatic fire or single blasts under manual control) and fire button assignments.

On starting the game, the player may select from one of three fighter craft, each carrying its own specialized weaponry Each is shown with a chart indicating specifications on its history (what military outfits previously used it, if any) starting firepower (main battery and different types of torpedoes and lasers), and other data with varying relevancy

The main battery power for each ship starts at equal force levels, but this increases as the fighter captures red power pods, up to level 8, with appropriate increases in effectiveness. It upgrades in the Type 1 ship to a laser wave that can penetrate terrain, in Type 2 to a plasma blast that covers a wide area, and in Type 3 to a compressed photon laser—called in the manual the overall strongest weapon you can have in the game

Torpedoes and lasers both range up to force 6. Type 1 torpedoes start as terrain-following sliders, but change to fragmentation torpedoes, Type 2 upgrades to a snooper that travels along the surface, and Type 3 launches in four directions at once Type 1 and 2 lasers shoot six-way beams, and Type 3 is a rolling laser with up to 14 beams at upper force levels. The player has to switch between torpedoes and lasers using the R button

Capturing a blue pod will supply a defensive force shield and getting a green clone pod adds another fighter to the available attack force (the equivalent of adding an extra life).

As with most video games, there are a number of opponents of various types on each level, with a boss blocking the exit. In **Super Nova** this is a large enemy battle cruiser It must be destroyed to get out of the zone.

Special power-ups can be obtained by destroying certain bonus targets.

There are 15 different levels or zones. Once through the first level and after getting past any subsequent level, there is an opportunity to select which among the other levels to go to. This is imited to those the player is qualified for, the cursor will only move to the icons on the selection screen that represent available zones.

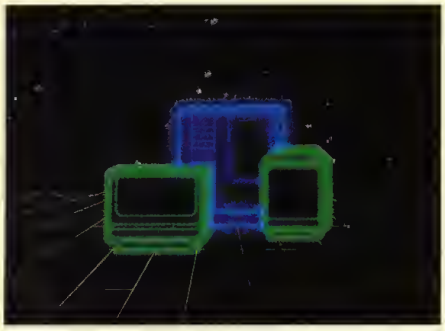
The game s strength but also possibly a weakness is the variety of options available at any point. The initial selection of a ship is equivalent to choosing which weapons to carry in an adventure game; the selection during play between lasers and torpedoes is a ittle like activating one of these weapons or another from inventory. Generally, however, in the adventure game the action is not taking place in real time with the onslaught coming from all directions and with only brief pauses. Thus, in **Super Nova**, the player must go beyond just twitch-reactions and learned pattern-responses to conscious but rapid decisions about which weapons to use in any particular situation

Super Nova is an exciting and frustrating game, all at the same time. It should be ideal for players who refuse to give up against almost insurmountable odds.

— *Ross Chamberlain*

COMPLEXITY	Intricate
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	82%
REPLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 86%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Wicked 18

PUBLISHER	Bullet-Proof Software
SYSTEM	SNES

THEME	Golf Simulation
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1-4
LEVELS	N/A

Ever go into a museum or art gallery or open a magazine and see one of those surrealistic landscapes by Salvador Dal or René Magritte and think you d like to explore it? Occasionally such a landscape comes to life in a PBS retrospective of computer graphics or appears in a commercial

Well now you can play golf there

The SNES is no Cray Computer able to recreate these lands in tiny detail But it can handle polygon graphics very wel and T&E Soft, a Japanese design group, developed a game ine True Golf Classics, using "Polysys technology " T&E gives it a workout in **Wicked 18**, with over 380 polygons on each screen

This allows an optional fly-by for each hole running from tee to green It also allows the player to select from a range of elevated views, which frequently helps in clarifying what lies ahead Because the polygon colors are based on terrain and angle, but not distance it is sometimes difficult to differentiate close and distant terrestrial features adjacent on the screen It helps to get a new angle.

The on-screen golfer is an animated bitmap image (male viewed from behind during the swing; the shirt color changes for alternate players. Trees and other objects are static images of variable size for perspective but always seen from the same viewpoint.

The world in which these golf links exist is strange, but not totally weird with the exception of some hovering, molar-shaped flying islands that may now and then obstruct a good, high drive toward the green There are weathered columns structures and Egyptian statues among the trees, cacti and bushes that dot the landscape

The fairways thread between raised reservoirs and river canyons as well as more normal water hazards. Portions of the fairways, and as often as not the greens, are on narrow mesa tops or islands cut from a shattered land At least two of the greens have to be approached via excruciatingly heartbreaking slopes, where, if the ball does not find purchase it rolls. .and rolls. .and

The viewpoint follows the ball along this trek, recreating the screen each time it rolls or bounces off the bottom thus stretching the time and sadistically rubbing it in

Occasionally it rains (it looks more like snow) This affects how the ball moves.

But aside from the environment in which the game is played, it's not a bad golf simulation with reasonably accurate physics and a lot of the detail that one might find in a computer version

There are five play modes. Tournament, Stroke Skins, Match and Practice. The battery-backed-up memory n the cart can keep a roster of up to ten players with names, handicaps and lots of statistics like longest drive nearest to pin, longest putt, how many holes-in-one, eagles, birdies, pars, bogeys, etc. However only four players may compete against each other at any one time

The Tournament game also has a built-in roster of 48 pros, all of whom are playing off-screen while the player is going through the course. They're never seen —bulletins appear on screen to report who s bogeyed and lost status, etc. and to advise the players current status

Stroke play lets up to four players compete for the lowest score total over

Your fellow golfers will offer helpful advice on various shots you will face.

the 18-hole round in Match play the competition is hole-by-hole with the victor the one winning the most holes. Skins play is similar to the Match game but enhanced by betting.

All of these take the players through the whole 18-hole round, with a "Tea Break" (similar to the Intermission provided in some long movies) following the 9th Hole The Practice mode lets a single player get familiar with any one hole

Available clubs range from the putter to a driver rated at 279 yards. Actual distance can be affected by wind direction and lie of the ball...and, of course obstacles. Foot placement allows the ball to fade right or draw left, but it can also hook or slice depending on the downstroke.

The approach to the stroke partially resembles that found in some other golf sims, with a C-shaped power scale that registers the backswing. The downstroke, however uses a red mark that scuttles back and forth across the face of a ball Timing of the button push affects the bal s trajectory

Attractive female caddies accompany the players on full-round play and offer advice and the occasional comment. Remarks like "Keep your eye on the ball" are dumb for a video game but it's really nice to get one like "Sweet drive—did you ever think of going on tour?"

— *Ross Chamberlain*

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	89%
REPLAYABILITY	93%

OVERALL 90%

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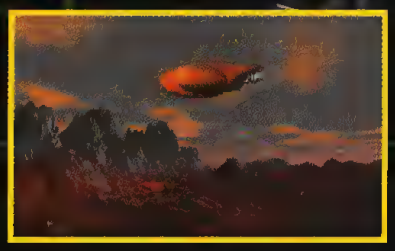

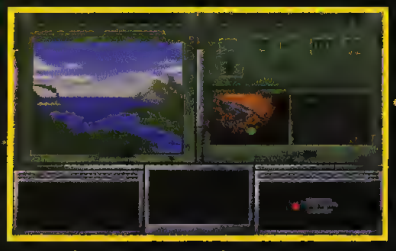

Actual IBM screen shots

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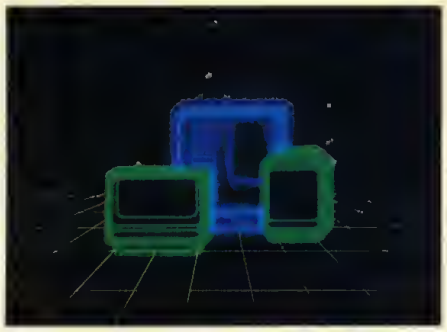


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

TMNT: Tournament Fighters

PUBLISHER	Konami
SYSTEM	SNES

THEME	Fighting
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	N/A

Cowabunga, dudes! Just when the cast of street fightin' competitors seemed to be firmed up, Konami releases its competitor, **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Tournament Fighters**.

TMNT· TF is a standard albeit hellishly difficult, street combat contest starring those heroes on the halfshell and their comic books enemies in lieu of Bison, Blanka or Shang-Tsung.

Konami has broken with its earlier Turtle treatments by giving Donatello, Raphael Leonardo and Michaelangelo a slightly different look: the cartoon, cutesy Turtles have become older, tougher, "badder" turtles with attitudes. And while the physical changes have been minimal the re-stylings are clearly based

The turtles face off against many hardy opponents in their tournament fights.

on the characters as they originally appeared in Eastman and Laird s Ronin parody comic book, rather than the more homogenized appearance from their later animated adventures.

In addition to the cowabunga crew gamers can opt to fight as Shredder Armaggon Chrome Dome, War Wingnut or Aska. These characters have been imported from a variety of places. Some are taken from the Mutant toy line; others are from the original black & white TMNT comic book.

Gamers can choose one of three fight modes. Tournament, which pits the player's character against a pre-seeded opponent; *Vs* Battle where both players select their fighters; and Story Battle, with the player's Turtle facing off against a preselected competitor The story battle is accompanied by dialog boxes which reveal a minimalist plot line

Each fighter has his own ultra-desperation maneuver This move, however is only usable when the attack bar is at full

Super-tough turtle tactics are required when battling hard-shelled adversaries.

strength. The player really earns this ability, because the only way to build up this bar is by successfully attacking the opponent.

TMNT· TF makes available the standard fight game options The gamer can set the skill level, reset the punch and kick buttons, choose the game time; and select the music, voice and sound settings.

The graphics are not especially impressive The turtle sprites could certainly be bigger **Mortal Kombat** (Acclaim) and **Street Fighter II** (Capcom) have gotten gamers used to larger characters, and **Eternal Champions** (Sega) enlarges upon the trend.

As for the backgrounds, they are so busy that they frequently distract the player from the all-important foreground action Also, while the SNES has an incredible color palette available, the backgrounds often use the same shades

of green and blue as the turtles, permitting gamers to "lose" their characters against the backdrop.

The playabi ity rating listed below is intended for the mainstream audience. For **SF II** mavens, this game will prove a formidable, but welcome challenge. Obviously, Konami is aiming this product at street fighting hardcores, as confirmed by the high skill levels that are demanded of even novice players. If Konami s boast isn't "This is not your little brother's Turtles game," it should be **TMNT· TF** is not a game for younger or inexperienced players.

The initial match in the Tournament Play Mode even at the zero difficulty level, has the player battling a Turtle clone; the differentiation being that the clone is blue. A player should not be forced to fight against a clone character until much farther into the learning curve Unfortunately this game *has* no learning curve—**TMNT· TF** is amped up from screen one and, like the Energizer Bunny it just keeps going.

Genesis gamers need not feel left out. Konami has a Genesis version of **TMNT· TF** with the combat set on different planets, as opposed to the SNES U.S. city sites. The Genesis version also features a slightly different story line as well as some new characters.

Sega and NES versions are also available Pass the pizza, dudes, and get ready to rumble! But only serious street fighters need apply

— *Laurie Yates*

COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	83%
PLAYABILITY	77%
REPLAYABILITY	76%

OVERALL 79%

Blades of Vengeance

PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Action/RPG
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	8

Isn't it strange how few RPGs have appeared on the scene since the 16-Bit era began? n 1989, four years into the 8-Bit video game cycle role-playing adventures were software staples, along with platform games, sports sims, and strategy contests. Yet for all their bulked-up technological muscle the 16-Bit systems have fixated almost exclusively on arcade and sports games.

The arrival of Beam Software s **Blades of Vengeance**, therefore with its magical spells and RPG trappings, might render **Phantasy Star** and **Ultima** fans giddy with expectation So let's get the bad news out of the way first: **Blades** is a lot closer to **Golden Axe** than it is to **Eye of the Beholder** The good news. as an action-oriented platform fantasy game with slight role-playing overtones, **Blades of Vengeance** is quite nice.

The game s plot comprises virtually all the best and worst clichés of the medieval fantasy genre· an Evil Force (Mannax, the Dark Lady· no relation to Mannix, the old TV private eye has pushed the Forces of Goodness up against the wal The Master—your basic Yoda/Merlin/Earl Weaver-type—has called up the last three qualified adventurers to make a final stand against Mannax army of Darkness. Thereafter the Master appears at the start of each level to deliver some useless bit of information such as informing the player that

they must next pass through a sea of flame, a fact which becomes pretty self-evident a screen or two into the game

The three adventurers who serve as player-characters in **Blades of Vengeance** are a beautiful sword-wielding female huntress, a male barbarian with an axe and a wizened wizard. These characters are rendered in surprisingly realistic detail, providing a pretty fair indication of how far game graphics have come since **Golden Axe**.

From a role-playing perspective the characters possess the usual superficial variations in strength, speed and other skill areas, though the actual ratings themselves are not presented either on-screen or in the documentation received. It becomes pretty obvious however, that while the male and female warriors can take out most first-level boogymen with a single blow, the wizard must deliver several After a bit of experimentation the variations among character types becomes self-evident.

As the player-character(s make their way through eight levels of platform gaming, there are magical potions and other power-ups to collect and use, as well as a variety of Mannax' monstrous minions to massacre Between levels, characters can resupply and purchase new goodies with the silver they've collected so far Spells, power-ups, weapons and silver are all automatically transferred to Inventory which can be accessed by hitting the Start button. While in this mode real-time activity stops and

players can even scan the surrounding, off-screen area through the use of the Scroll command

Unfortunately, the two-player version is a bit of a drag. Because both characters occupy the same space on the horizontally-scrolling playfield they are metaphorically and visually, bound together If one player-character falls into the flaming sea on the first level for example, the other character is locked onto that screen unable to advance. So, the remaining player's p-c is to be found pressed smack up against the right side of the screen while being attacked by off-screen enemies. It's also difficult to coordinate scrolling and other inventory-based play elements.

Many unique characters will try to halt your progress throughout the game.

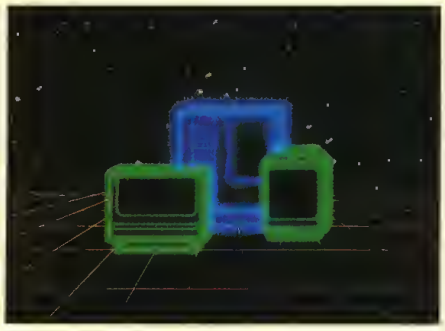
In other words the only way **Blades of Vengeance** will work in two-player format is if both gamers play at a similar skill level, and even then it is guaranteed to produce frustration because timing and coordination, when factored by two, is seldom synchronized.

Blades is no breakthrough but it's a well-produced and enjoyable arcade take on the fantasy adventure theme. Now if only someone would try publishing the real thing.

— Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	94%
PLAYABILITY	82%
REPLAYABILITY	87%

OVERALL 86%



VIDEO GAME GRLLERY

Magic Boy

PUBLISHER	JVC
SYSTEM	SNES

THEME	Arcade/Puzzle
MEGABITS	4
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	64

There's magic in the air and Hewlett, (the absent-minded, tanglefooted slow-witted, wizard s apprentice has accidentally used it to turn his boss into a large brightly colored pachyderm

Hewlett, JVC s newest side-scrolling hero and the star of **Magic Boy** was directed by his master to add parsley to a brew being concocted. Thanks to the fact that Hewlett is about as bright as mud, he added mercury instead and now the botched spell has wreaked havoc, not only on the wizard but with every cute and cuddly animal within a 100 mile radius of the castle. Hewlett must capture the mutated creatures as he searches for his elephantine master in order to return things to normal

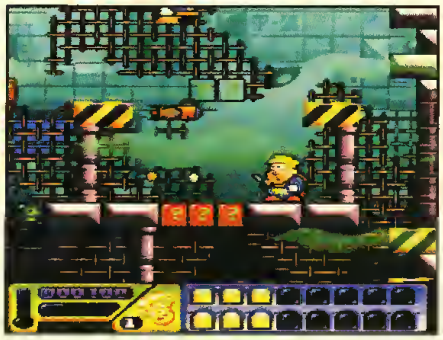
Magic Boy sends the gamer through four worlds. Sand Land Wet World, Plastic Place and Future Zone Each location is visited twice but the second visit produces different scenery When the player initially enters a world only four levels are available Once those are completed, the gamer can access levels five through eight. The available levels can be completed in any order

To capture the animals Hewlett must stun them with his magic wand scoop them up and deposit them into prison cells located at the bottom of the screen. If he doesn't drop the magical monsters before they regain their wits, Hewlett may be stung and lose a life

Navigating the wizard s kingdom is not an afternoon strol in the park. The objects encountered in **Magic Boy** can both impede and aid the player Thin blue dissolving squares fade out as Hewlett walks on them, while ice squares can be helpful because Hewlett moves faster and can therefore jump higher or farther than normal Sticky squares, on the other hand not only slow our hero down, but also keep him earth-bound as no jumping can be done while he occupies these blocks Springs which act as trampolines and pistons which automatically activate are also scattered throughout the levels.

Trap squares are a crap shoot, producing one of three results. red ball traps cost the gamer a life; big spikes allow Hewlett to shoot monsters he couldn't otherwise reach and twin spikes are safe to walk on, but not to jump or fall on Water by the way should always be avoided since Hewlett can't swim.

Magic Boy certainly doesn't lack for power-ups. There are extra lives and continues scattered about the various screens as well as other goodies. Every creature captured yields a token which could be a piece of fruit, worth bonus points or produce the power to shoot through walls, shoot up and down, or launch double and triple shots. There are also E-X-T-R-A tokens, which when collected provide the player with an additional life There are also level warps which permit the gamer to skip forward a random number of levels while the magic book reveals hidden bonus rooms.



Guide Hewlett through four worlds of challenge and wonder in his quest.

The graphics are nothing special most obviously resembling a cleaned up 8-Bit game with a better color selection. The animations are stiff and there are any number of glitches which allow the player-character to stand with one foot on a platform and the other in mid-air Even at 4-Meg, **Magic Boy** is no more than a fair job Moreover the visual presentation of the player-character makes him look more like a kid dressing up as Superman than a character in a magical environment. Did Hewlett need a red cape?

The background music, while upbeat, is inexplicably reminiscent of calypso. The juxtaposition of Caribbean music with the fantasy environs of the wizard s kingdom is more than a ittle bizarre The standard twitch game "zap" and "plunk" sound effects complete the audio.

Magic Boy's playability is fairly high While the gamer must replay each world having the variety of a new layout for the second time through is a nice change from most platform games The information at the bottom of the screen is easy to read and displays the score EXTRA tokens the number of star icons which have been collected remaining lives, and the amount of power remaining in Hewlett's special weapon

Magic Boy won't win awards for state-of-the-art technology but it offers a pleasant gaming experience.

— *Laurie Yates*

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	79%
PLAYABILITY	84%
REPLAYABILITY	82%

OVERALL 80%

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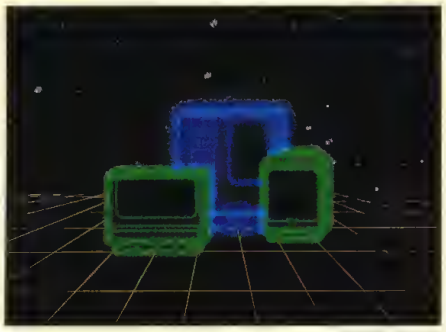

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Claymates

PUBLISHER	Interplay
SYSTEM	SNES

THEME	Arcade
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	34+

Interplay has taken a long time to release **Claymates**, but it actually preceded **Clay Fighter** in production **Clay Fighter** beat **Claymates** to the store n order to take advantage of the fighting game craze While **Clay Fighter** is little more than a standard fighting game with a lot of fresh ideas as far as game play, **Claymates** stands out as a creative side-scroller that takes place n a clay-based world

The player moves a blue clay ball that can transform into one of five clay animal friends (hence the game s title whenever it touches a colored piece of clay The various properties of the animals, the multiple paths through each level and the entertaining sub-games propel this contest past the standard video game fare

Claymates begins with a cartoon that sets up the story Professor Putty has developed a formula that can turn creatures into clay Jobo, a jealous witch doctor, wants to steal the formula so that he can be the only person with this ability He confronts the Professor just as his son Clayton, gets home from school The Professor refuses to surrender the formula so Jobo turns Clayton into a clay ball as punishment and kidnaps the horrified scientist. **Claymates** players must control Clayton as he makes his way across four continents to defeat Jobo and save his father

The designers of **Claymates** infused the game with lots of variety and alternatives so that players can approach the game differently and still have fun The basic goal is to reach the end of each of the game's 17 levels before the timer counts down from 10:00 However a variety of special items, out-of-the-way locations and paths give players a chance to spend more of the available time to investigate a level more thoroughly

Also, red and green crystals (found throughout the level and produced when Clayton eliminates an enemy) prove useful When Clayton finishes a level with 100 or more crystals, he qualifies for a bonus level For every additional 100 crystals the game awards an extra life. Some of the special items are: a hammer (destroys all on-screen enemies) dimension door (transports Clayton to secret areas and eyes (produce more crystals). Players can obtain these special items and additional crystals from mutasizers (funnels through which Clayton squeezes) and geo-shaped boxes (require a geo-shape to open). None of these special items are necessary to finish a level, but they make it easier to progress and obtain extra lives.

Whoever thought a ball of clay could be such fun? Use the right animals to win!

The bonus levels and between-level map sub-games add welcome variety to the standard level goals. The bonus level for more than 100 crystals is an overhead grid onto which the player must bounce a ball so that it hits the yellow squares. This level awards points for good aim and makes creative use of the Super NES's Mode 7 effects.

If players collect all four letters to the word "CLAY " they enter a bonus level set up like a pachinko machine in which they can collect more crystals and lives. Finally players can enjoy an interesting puzzle game on the overhead map in which they must guide two robots to eliminate rocks and trees that block their way to the next map screen

The clay animals themselves are integral to game play. The clay ball moves too slowly and makes meager jumps. The "claymates" are not as sluggish The animals are: Muckster (cat), Oozy (mouse), Goopy (fish), Globmeister (gopher) and Doh-Doh (bird). The animation and actions of each character show off their diverse personalities Goopy is one mean fish while Doh-Doh is a clumsy bird

Each has different abilities with obvious uses in the game s levels. Muckster can climb trees. Oozy can fit in small spaces and move faster than even Sonic the Hedgehog. Goopy swims and Doh-Doh flies. Globmeister digs holes and throws acorns After a few games, most players will know how to take advantage of the different animals

Additional balls of clay will make an orb float around the character that can be thrown at enemies—yet another level of protection.

Claymates is quite a colorful game in which each major area (continent) reflects the look and feel of the real-world area it represents The Africa levels take place in a tree-lined jungle, while the USA levels look like the streets and backyards of America. In addition the music and sound effects for the levels complement the graphics in creating a distinct atmosphere for each area The Pacific levels use a nautical theme while the Space Station level has a futuristic rock and roll beat.

Claymates also makes full use of clay animation where appropriate. The transformation effects for the clay animals as well as the animals themselves suit their clay origins.

Claymates will entertain most video game fans because of the variety the designers worked into the game play There are many approaches to the levels. Some players might finish a level as Doh-Doh while others stay underground as Globmeister It also features secret warps to let players skip levels they have already finished and an infinite number of continues so that no level becomes too hard to beat.

The emphasis on game play and fun, complemented by the colorful graphics and rousing music, establishes **Claymates** as a winner with a group of characters players will want to see again and again.

— *Russ Ceccola*

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	95%
REPLAYABILITY	90%

OVERALL 90%

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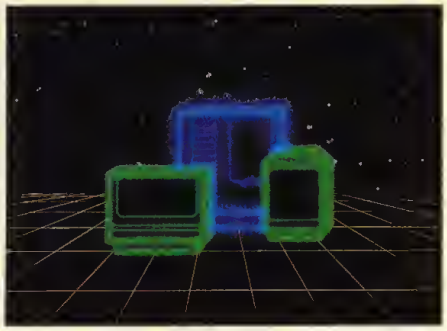

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Race Drivin'

PUBLISHER	Tengen
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Driving
MEGABITS	4
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

Couch potato racers, start your engines! **Race Drivin'** the sequel to the Atari coin-op hit, **Hard Drivin'** is burning rubber from the arcades to home thanks to Tengen s Genesis conversion

Three prefab track options are available for drivers, including the original **Hard Drivin'** track. The Super Stunt Track includes loops curved banks, and corkscrews. The Autocross Track, on the other hand, is a flat, ground-hugging course Gamers can design their own personalized tracks by selecting the Custom Option The on-screen nstructions for the track construction set are easy to follow and the player can also select the background landscape (desert, mountains or city).

Drivers can choose a Roadster Sportster or Speedster, all of which have their own handling characteristics. The three road chompers have the option of manual or automatic transmission. The automatic versions are good starter cars as the driver can concentrate on navigating rather than shifting gears

Challenging roadways, such as the Stunt Track, test your drving abilities.

Racers begin the original and super stunt tracks with one minute 45 seconds of time. As the cars pass the checkpoints on the track and finish line the play time is extended The race is over when the last second has elapsed In the autocross and custom tracks, drivers compete against their previous time. After the third lap is repeated, the race will continue as long as the previous time is surpassed.

Points are awarded for burning up the asphalt, not for devastating the landscape, so drivers need to keep it on the road. At the end of each race, a map of the track appears, revealing the driver's route

In addition to avoiding signs and structures, drone cars also provide obstacles Occasionally, a drone car will appear and ram the driver from behind in order to speed up a Sunday driver

Crashes can, and do, occur The nerve-wracking crunching sound, as well as the visual display of cracked glass across the windshield, occurs whenever vehicles, buildings, embankments and fences are run into at high speed Additionally if a jump, hill or ramp is taken at excessive speed, or if the car is off the road for too long, the vehicle is trashed and automatically repositioned at the previous milestone

If the gamer clocks in faster than a predetermined speed in the stunt and original modes, there's a Challenge Lap race between the driver and the current **Race Drivin'** champ. After defeating the silicon champ, the new high score will be recorded on the game's volatile vanity board

The 3-D polygon graphics are overall satisfactory and nicely mimic the coin-op visuals Occasionally however, discordant effects do occur such as a floating barn or buildings that can be seen clearly but have pieces, such as roofs, missing. There are also some bugs in the custom track format, which occasionally produce apparently complete tracks with roads leading nowhere Additionally, the text on the dashboard panel is rather small and blurry

Problems aside, however, the first person perspective of soaring through the air after a jump, or being twisted 'round in the loops and corkscrews is incredible, and the colors are vividly realistic.

The sound effects are nicely rendered, with enough shifting gears, revving engines, squealing tires and bone-shattering crunches to send gamers searching for safety harnesses and crash helmets.

Race Drivin's playability is enhanced by subtle options. For example, the traffic lane can be altered from right (U.S.) to left (Europe/Japan), while the Speed Mode can change between MPH (U.S.) and Km/H Europe/Japan) Other options include changing the difficulty (easy medium or hard), and a Practice Mode, which omits the timer and drone traffic, permitting the driver to feel out the track at their ease.

One addition that would have made playing much easier, however is a small insert showing the entire track, and the driver's position on it. The controls also aren't quite as flexible as those in the Atari arcade version but that's to be expected

Race Drivin' while not perfect, provides a fast-paced sequel to **Hard Drivin'** as well as some genuine automotive thrills Hint: construct a course with three successive loop-de-loops, then try walking a straight line

— Laurie Yates

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	83%
PLAYABILITY	88%
REPLAYABILITY	89%

OVERALL 86%

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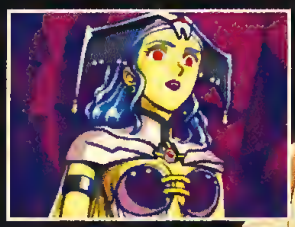

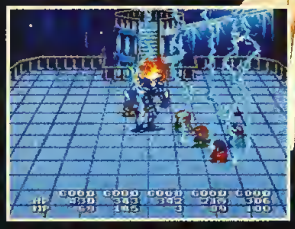

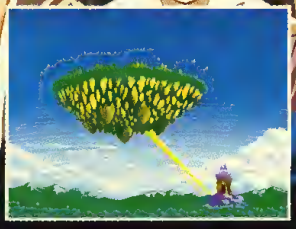

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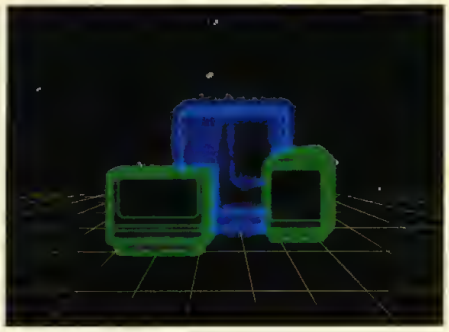

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Toejam & Earl 2

PUBLISHER	Sega
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Action
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	17

As one of the most devoted and fanatical fans of the original **Toejam & Earl**, this reviewer must openly admit to a crushing sense of disappointment upon first viewing this sequel The creators of the cult classic had taken the marvelously open-ended, angled overhead perspective of the original game and given us—chokel gagl—a platform game!

"No way!" was the verdict.

Fortunately, the case went to appeal.

"Way " was the reconsidered opinion after a couple of minutes of actual play "Definitely way." True, **Toejam and Earl 2** *is* a platform game. But then, so are **Super Mario World**, **Sonic the Hedgehog**, and **Prince of Persia**. Sure it's an overused format, but that doesn't mean that original and marvelously entertaining work can't be accomplished within the side-scrolling, twitch game universe.

As fans of the original will recall, a pair of funky, hip-hop aliens crash landed on Earth, where they were forced to traverse over two dozen levels full of power-ups and prizes, as well as the wildest collection of antagonists ever gathered together in one game, in order to collect the scattered pieces of their space craft.

In **Toejam 2**, the duo have returned to Funkatron, but have unwittingly transported several stowaway earthlings back home as well. Needless to say, there went the neighborhood. The fields aren't as funky· there are obnoxious human children hiding in the treetops, and even Mac Daddy Meadow doesn't smell quite as sweet. In fact, word has it that the Funkapotamus, the most sacred creature on Funkatron, has gone into hiding, taking his Funk with him Things just couldn't be worse; even the planet's color has begun to periodically drain away

Being stand-up Funkatronics, Toejam & Earl take it upon themselves to scour the planet and round up the humans. Their search takes them far and wide, but they must track down each earthling, zap them into small glass jars and toss them in a transport on a one-way trip back to Earth. When all the humans on a given level have been rounded up, the player-character(s) head for the Earth Transport, where they toss the humans on board and approach a super trampoline which vaults them to the next level. Passwords are used at strategic milestones in order to save games in progress.

Toejam and Earl are back again, with a exciting adventure. Watch your step!

Toejam & Earl 2 is a textbook example of how much fun a platform game can be, given some innovation and a kickin' sense of humor The trees and bushes, for example, can be searched for humans and prizes (some good, some booby), or an entire screen can be "scanned" using T&E's funky powers. Our heroes can even transport themselves through solid objects.

T&E 2 is certainly a more linear game than the original, so there s less random exploration in favor of a more concentrated, object-oriented quest. Nonetheless, the characters can move freely in either direction and there are more than enough different landscapes to keep the peepers attentive.

The graphics are mostly excellent, except for a few spots where they are downright spectacular, such as the incredible, three-dimensional Mac Daddy Meadow (one of the most beautiful images ever produced in an electronic game) with parallax scrolling employed in both the foreground and background to create an eye-popping illusion of depth

Music is once again an all-important element within the game's design structure. There's even a periodic bonus game in which our heroes must perfectly reproduce a hip-hop rhythm to gain bonus points.

Sure, there are some elements from the first game that veteran Funkatronics will miss. The unique nature of each present is de-emphasized, and there is nothing here comparable to the joy of discovering a pair of Icarus Wings for example. It's also true that **T&E 2** isn't as great a two-player game as the original, which used a split-screen technique, allowing the two stars to wander freely on different levels, whereas the platform format links Toejam & Earl to the same screen. Nonetheless, perhaps the most admirable thing about this game is that it *is* different from the original. Rather than retool the old engine and people with new characters and prizes, the T&E team started almost from scratch and showed that their delightfully zany characters can carry the day in any format.

Get down. Get funky But most of al , get this game

— Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	93%
SOUND	96%
PLAYABILITY	97%
REPLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 96%

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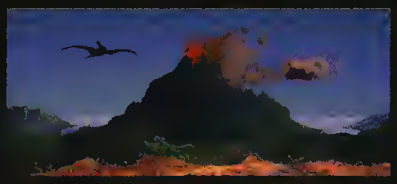
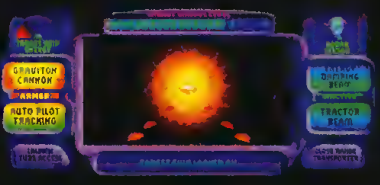
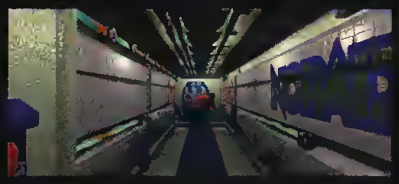


Travel through time



Intense arcade action



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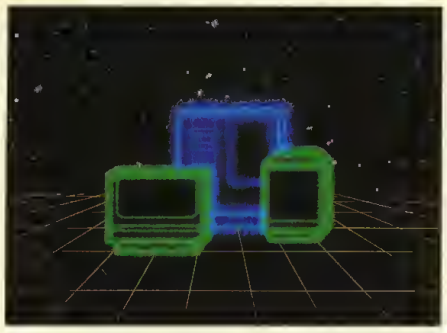

VIDEO GAME GALLERY

James Pond 3: Operation Starfi5h

PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Arcade/Action
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	100+

Pond's the name, James Pond. And defeating Dr Maybe and his vile henchmen of J.A.W.S. is our scaly secret agent s life's work. **James Pond 3: Operation Starfi5h** (pronounced "starfish") brings FI5H's top agent of vacation and into action where he's soon up to his gills in hot water

Pond for players unacquainted with his previous exploits, is considered the perfect agent. In addition to a 100 percent success rate, he is a master of disguise a fabulous athlete and an accomplished gymnast.

Oh yes, he s also a fish Pond lives and travels in style: a submerged luxury liner serves as his home-base and he uses an Austin Marlin Lagoonda for transportation.

After suffering a humiliating defeat at the North Pole in **James Pond 2–**

James Pond must follow orders from his superiors in order to finish the mission.

Codename: RoboCod, Dr. Maybe has gathered the galaxy's most feared gangsters to form Junta Against World Safety J.A.W.S. has the simple goal of destroying Pond and FI5H prepatory to taking over the world for its own, sel-fish reasons.

According to early surveillance reports, Maybe has definitely established a secret base on the dark side of the moon. Unfortunately, the three agents that FI5H sent to investigate the situation have been captured.

Fortunately, a space probe has exposed the source of Maybe's impending world domination· dairy products Official Codak photos revealed that the moon s cheesy surface is dotted with yogurt lakes. By mining the finest quality Moon Cheese and monopolizing the world's markets, Maybe's plans will have a devastating effect on lactate-lovers everywhere.

The world must depend on Pond's cool, efficient ability to save the three missing agents, destroy Maybe's cheese mines and defeat the Doctor himself. One of the captured agents, Finnius Frog, is vital to the successful completion of Pond's mission, and another is Angel Fish, Pond's sweetie.

Fortunately, while Pond starts off empty finned, he doesn't have to stay that way A great deal of FI5H s equipment has been dropped on the moon to ensure Pond's success. A helmet provides protection from falling objects and spiked ceilings, while the umbrella allows the holder to slow down and control his falls. A fruit gun fires homing cakes, strawberries, oranges, apples and lemons. Dynamite and bombs are also available, while spring boots permit Pond to jump very high, and thrusters fire yogurt blasts X-ray glasses expose hidden headblocks and the fruit suit causes damage to enemies, while providing Pond with an extra layer of protection

Other power-ups include: extra weight (you'll need it when dealing with lunar gravity), hearts (extra lives)· teeth (either to be thrown at the enemies or placed in Finnius' mouth); cheese· boots, rocks; fuel for the thruster· TVs (if it breaks, a ghost appears and serves as a trampoline for Pond); poison (good for Finnius bad for Pond); and red herrings, which provide invincibility. Bonuses are also available· coins, trophies and crowns all enhance point totals while moons will yield an extra life if enough are collected Teacups provide special bonuses if all four are gathered for each level while stars increase energy totals.

Starfi5h s graphics run the gambit. The title screens are impressive and the story line is related using a combination of text and graphics displays, including a pre-game text crawl reminiscent of the "Star Wars" movies. The game graphics are good, but the animation of Pond is a little stiff The music is a John Williams-style mock heroic score and the speech bites at the beginning of each level are very clear

Starfi5h's playability is very high There are passwords available after Pond neutralizes an enemy guardian/boss, or on levels with a password beacon The map screen indicates where Pond has been and the path he took to get there. Orange pathways lead to normal levels, while blue pathways indicate a secret level, accessible only by special tokens. Completed levels are marked by happy green stars, while sad orange stars flag levels requiring Pond's attentions. There are also three possible endings to **Starfi5h**, so the game is also very replayable

Secret agents may be passé at the moment, but **James Pond 3: Operation Starfi5h** deserves a look just for the halibut.

— Laurie Yates

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	87%
REPLAYABILITY	87%

OVERALL 84%

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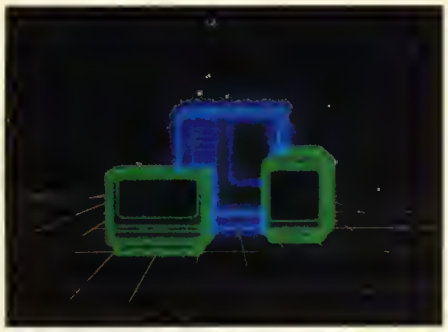


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Greatest Heavyweights

PUBLISHER	Sega
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Boxing
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1-2
LEVELS	N/A

Just in time to celebrate Evander Holyfield s victory over Riddick Bowe comes Sega s latest boxing game The Real Deal is only one of the princes of pugilism included in this cartridge, which bears a striking resemblance to last year's Sega ring entry starring Holyfield

The solitaire or head-to-head contest has two complete sets of fighters You can stage an exhibition bout; hold a tournament with the all-time greats, or create a fictitious boxer and guide him to the belt.

The roster of champions includes luminaries from the early 1900s to the present day The eight champions are. Dempsey· Marciano; Louis, Frazier; Holmes, Al , Patterson, and Holyfield

The game depicts each classic fighter with large, photo-realistic drawings, together with his record in the pre-fight phase During the actual bout, the champions are large animated figures, notably similar to their real-life counterparts. Trash talking during the fight, accomplished with superb digitized speech, also ties the on-screen images more closely to the historic personalities.

There are 30 imaginary boxers. The opposition improves in strength, speed stamina and ring strategy as your fighter climbs the ladder But he can get better, too. Between bouts, a training screen lets the would-be contender upgrade major aspects of his performance

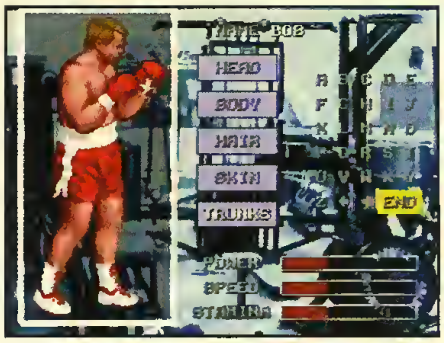
In the career mode, **Greatest Heavyweights** lets the user save the hopeful titlist between play-sessions with an onboard battery It takes a lot of bouts to rise to number one, so the save system is a virtual necessity.

The video gamer determines his or her boxer's physical appearance at the start of his career There are banks of choices for head, body skin and trunks The boxer is also named at this point. Later after the end of each bout, a newspaper page appears with a headline announcing the win or loss.

The playfield provides a close-up, side perspective view of the two combatants in the ring. Because of the restricted visual field the screen incorporates a long shot of the ring, located at the top-center of the display, to help keep tabs on the fighters position within the ring. Manipulating the direction disk up and down causes the man to circle his opponent, while pushing the direction disk left and right increases and decreases the distance between the men Some of the champions need to get and stay inside, but others must utilize ring movement to strike quickly and then dart out of range.

There's nothing elaborate about the control system. One button throws the left, one blocks and the other hurls a right. Pressing A or B with the direction disks turns a jab into a hook. With two buttons engaged at the same nstant, the fighter throws a devastating left or right uppercut, the most likely knockout punch

An energy bar for each fighter is shown near the bottom of the screen. It's easy to see when a man approaches knockout territory In **Worlds Greatest Heavyweights**, like most boxing carts, it isn't easy to put up an effective defense but bobbing, retreating, and throwing lots of jabs can gain a weary boxer some precious seconds of recuperation



Players can create their own boxers based on characteristics they provide.

The sound and music are one of the game s strengths. Michael Buffer whose "Let's get ready to rumble" has become a catchphrase among sports fans, announces the participants in each card and raises the winner's hand in victory at the end

A ring girl in a skimpy bikini adds color to the normal lull between rounds. Smart managers will pay less attention to the beauty than the punch stats though, which often reveal serious strategic flaws while there s still time enough to fix them

Greatest Heavyweights is by far Sega s best boxing video game so far It strikes a balance between showing the whole ring with smal characters or showing only the fighters with large ones. Most players will find that a reasonable compromise and fight fans are likely to find **Greatest Heavyweights** a rousing action-sports experience that will produce feelings of an era gone by.

— Arnie Katz

COMPLEXITY	Simple
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	92%
REPLAYABILITY	88%

OVERALL 89%

AAAHHHHHH

AAAHHHHHH

AAAHHHHHH

AAAHHHHHH

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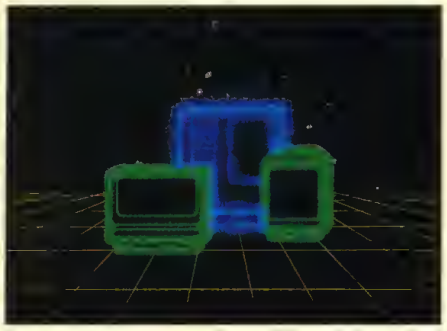


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Super Battletank 2

PUBLISHER	Absolute
SYSTEM	SNES

THEME	Combat Action
MEGABITS	16
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	16

It's only a game. Really.

The action takes place in response to a middle eastern desert offensive by an unnamed enemy using Russian-built armament. The manual (*Commanders Directive*) is written like a military briefing manual probably should be written and the M1A2 Main Battletank—the war vehicle in which the player wil set out on a series of increasingly hazardous and difficult missions—is equipped with enormous firepower and the ability to call in air support in extreme circumstances.

During game play enemy tanks and helicopters heave into and out of view in wild abandon shooting with helpful imprecision under conditions ranging from bright daylight to starless night. The player may select from four types of weapons. a 120mm cannon a 7.62mm machine gun a Phalanx high-speed machine gun and laser-guided missiles. Defense systems include a self-generated smoke screen and the air support option. On occasion, intelligence reports on the com-link will advise of impending SCUD missile attacks on allied supply depots, and the tank must aid in triangulating on the SCUD launch points or lose those options for fuel and repairs

But it's not a simulation. The first hint of that might be the pragmatic (if unstated) reason for keeping those supply depots open in contrast to protecting allied personnel as well as material

Another is the mission number (1 to 16) on the Cockpit Computer Display a digital readout which also indicates current targets of opportunity, range and total targets remaining. A good sharp image on the television is recommended for reading the digital displays, however

But the biggest clue is the long-range radar map, an alternate screen to the tank cockpit that is the primary environment for the game. This long-range map, presumably reporting information from the NavStar navigational satellite, is an 8-by-8 grid that presents the player's area of operations (A.O.). It shows the location of the player's tank in relation to enemy targets mine fields and supply depots (all shown as icons). First of all, although the area covered is presumably fairly large the tank, which has a maximum speed of 42 mph, scoots across it with alacrity Judging by the time it takes for the tank to cross the grid, the A.O might be all of a mile square But by far the most telling point is that when the tank reaches one edge of the grid, it *reappears on the opposite side!* The A.O wraps around!

So, it's a game. And once one puts aside all the military malarkey and accepts it as a first-person perspective shooting gallery with a variety of options, then it's easy to get on with playing and skip worrying about what effect this mission will have on the overall war effort!

That's regardless of the doleful message that appears on screen each time the M1A2 is blown away This will undoubtedly occur many times before an inexperienced player gets the hang of driving across the country, switching and controlling the different weapons as required, and trying to keep the astonishingly mobile enemy targets in view

The graphics in all but the long-range map view are above average, with highly evocative changes in time of day, digitized mobile units in a variety of angles, and a satisfactory interior layout in the cockpit itself The snout of the cannon (overhead in the exterior display, only visible when the cannon s operational) has a definite sense of menace about it, supportive of the bully in us all, perhaps.

n certain missions when the M1A2 is about to reach its final objective, the player finds himself outside, manning a machine gun atop the tank, blowing away at a fiercely responsive enemy gauntlet—probably a first in tank games.

Besides the new variety of weapons and enemies, SBT2 has installed some full-motion video sequences depicting the launching of SCUD missiles, the satisfactory destruction of enemy targets by the laser-guided missiles and, in the title sequence, a harrowing imminent road-kill viewpoint of the approaching M1A2.

So, it's your choice—get out there and do your duty for your fellows, your country and the martial way of life, or just have a belligerent blast blowing away those bad guys You can have fun either way

— *Ross Chamberlain*

A Word with Garry Kitchen

"We were pleased with the original Super Battletank, but with only 4 Megs it had its limitations," said Garry Kitchen, Absolute's hands-on president and CEO and veteran game designer. "We wanted to see what we could do with 16 Meg in this sequel. It allowed us to build in a lot of depth of game play, and maximize the use of digitized graphics and full-motion video. Now more than one enemy can appear on screen at a time, for fierce battle play."

He pointed out that many games reveal all they've got in the first few minutes, then just add levels of difficulty. "We tried to spread a lot of the features throughout the 16 missions, so each one has its own unique flavor."

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	81%
PLAYABILITY	90%
REPLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 86%

The Art of Fighting

PUBLISHER	**Takara**
SYSTEM	**SNES**

THEME	**Fighting**
MEGABITS	**12**
PLAYERS	**1-2**
LEVELS	**9**

"It's all here, chief "

"We'd better check it again, anyway."

"OK. We don't want a game getting into the stores without al the required components."

"I have the official fighting game parts manifest here. You call out the items from **Art of Fighting**, and I ll find them on the list."

"Kidnapped girl?"

"Check. Yuri Someone s got her stashed."

"Missing father who is a great sensei? Fighting hero son who must prove himself a fighting master in hand-to-hand battle?"

"Check. Check. They're Takuma and Ryo Sakazaki in this one Takuma is missing, so it's up to Ryo to search Southtown gain information from defeated foes, and find his missing sister "

"Does **Art of Fighting** have an Occidental hero too? Smart marketers don't neglect the U.S. market"

"Uhhh yup. Robert Garcia. He s the son of a friend of Takuma. You can be either Robert or Ryo, who are equal in power Both are very skillfully drawn too though the fighting animations are a little stiff on the jumps."

"So there s jumping? Punching and kicking, too?"

"Check. All of the moves are triggered by pressing various buttons, sometimes in combination with the control pad There are punches and kicks of several intensities too."

"What about highly detailed non-interactive backgrounds?"

"Gorgeous graphics, check. The backgrounds scroll slightly to the left and right as Ryo or Robert and his opponent of the moment jump, punch and kick."

"You re getting ahead of me. So **Art of Fighting** has special attacks and like that? The warriors gain power as they defeat opponents?"

"The fighter expends Spirit to execute super attacks, but he can replenish this energy through victory The Raz button drains the opponent of some Spirit energy "

"What about those increases in power?"

"Yuri's rescuer can enhance his abilities by winning a bonus round when the opportunity is offered There are three simple contests each capable of improving the fighter's abilities."

"A little different than some games but I think we can still check off on it. What about spoken comments of a martial arts nature?"

"You mean short, shouted phrases? Plenty of them here and they're effectively placed in the game, too."

s"It's looking good Did the designers of this home version of an SNK coin-op remember to include the extras, like a choice of one- or three-round bouts? Continues? A countdown timer to limit the duration of rounds?"

"Check, check and triple check! **Art of Fighting** has eight difficulty settings, a level for anyone from a rank beginner to a complete cyberchamp."

"That's everything, boss."

"Looks like we can give **Art of Fighting** the official certificate."

The moves are intense and the action non-stop in this martial arts showdown.

"They' be so proud at Takara."

"They should be **Art of Fighting** is a beautiful SNES rendition of the 1992 arcade machine. It is expertly programmed with almost no weaknesses."

"Sounds ike a good bet for those who liked the original but haven't been able to play it at home on their SNES."

"That's about the size of it.

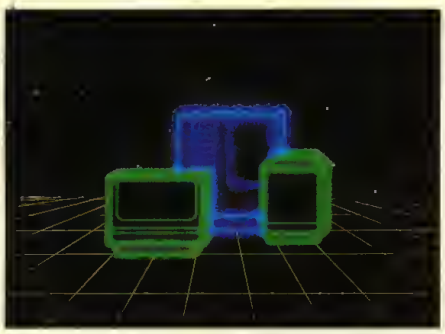
"Ready to look at the next hot new fighting game?"

"Right after lunch I m buying."

– Frank Laney Jr

COMPLEXITY	**Simple**
GRAPHICS	**92%**
SOUND	**83%**
PLAYABILITY	**88%**
REPLAYABILITY	**85%**

OVERALL 84%



VIDEO GAME GALLERY

RoboCop 3

PUBLISHER	Acclaim/Flying Edge
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Arcade
MEGABITS	N/A
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	6

We al know the story by now: In a near-future version of Detroit, certain areas of the old city have become so dangerous that the traditional police force (now under the control of private corporation, Omni Consumer Products) simply cannot cope OCP spent millions on experiments to create robotic and cybernetic law enforcement officers but only one project—the process which transplanted the brain of a dying police officer into a robotic body—has been even remotely successful That experiment created the being known as RoboCop, a cyborg policeman who prefers eating a lunch of lawbreakers to devouring doughnuts.

Now in its third filmic incarnation, minus original star Peter Weller, this faltering franchise s dubious video game rights were snatched up by Acclaim And if the film is nothing to flip your dipstick over, **RoboCop 3** the video game is even less prepossessing.

The plot has OCP attempting to gentrify the crime-infested Cadillac Heights area by tossing out the current residents and rebuilding from ground zero. Most of the Heights' denizens are too poor, old or otherwise powerless to resist OCP's eviction process, but a group of hard-core local druggies and homeboys known collectively as the Splatter Punks are determined to hold out against the forces of corporate power

OCP's response to this resistance is right out of the book. Unfortunately, the book is *Mein Kampf* OCP hires a private army known as the Urban Rehabilitation Corps, or Rehabs, to eliminate the Splatter Punks by any means necessary including tanks and guided missiles Pretty soon, Cadillac Heights has turned into a true war zone with both sides turning up the heat and the neighborhood being reduced to ashes.

Fools rush in, we are told, where angels fear to tread Well, so does RoboCop. Into this seemingly no-win situation comes the heavy footfall of our star and hero, player-character RoboCop, bringing justice (mostly in the form of death), to both sides in an attempt to save the innocent residents of Cadi lac Heights from being caught in the crossfire.

RoboCop 3 isn't a bad game Its problem is endemic in the licensing-mad world of video games. publishers acquire a movie license and convert it to electronic form by dropping the protagonist into one of several generic platform scenarios. RoboCop could just as easily be Terminator, Demolition Man Dennis the Menace or a Raptor It's the same scrolling twitch game over and over, with no thought given to what it is that makes the character under license unique

Most of the touches that make **RoboCop** interesting, even on a totally superficial level, are among the missing in this game conversion Why aren't there any computer terminals, for example, for RoboCop to interface with, thereby obtaining key information on the next phase of action? And if RoboCop is indeed the "one-man army equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry bulletproof armor and literal nerves of steel" described in the documentation, then

The metal-clad metropolitan servant is on patrol, and the city needs his help!

why does he enter Cadillac Heights armed with only a single-shot pistol? Because the designers had to follow the platform game convention of having the player-character find power-up weapons (everything from a laser pistol to a missile launcher) along the way, that's why!

RoboCop 3 looks nice enough when the game begins, it's only after a few minutes of play that disappointment sets in. The graphics and animation soon stand revealed as journeyman stuff· acceptable and professional-looking, but lacking in realistic movement (the human beings are animated with all the fluid grace of our clunky robot hero and ambiance. The action and gunfights, which are after all the basis of the game are not produced in an appealing, realistic or even cinematic manner

RoboCop 3 isan out-of-the-can product representing a complete failure of imagination It was bad enough seeing products like this back in the 8-bit days, but when this is the best that Acclaim can give us on the Genesis, it's time to do some serious rethinking about licenses and why software publishers purchase them. True, the film on which this game is based was neither successful nor inspirational, but it was certainly no worse than *Alien³*, which Acclaim turned into a spectacular product.

Next time, let's hope someone thinks about that.

— Bill Kunkel

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	76%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	68%
REPLAYABILITY	73%

OVERALL 71%

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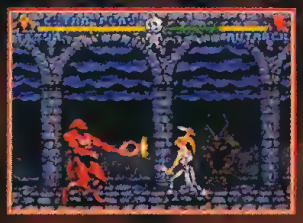

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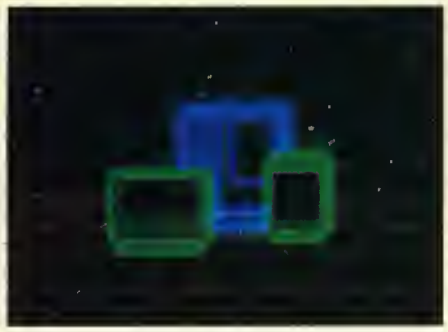


VIDEO GAME GALLERY

Sonic Spinball

PUBLISHER	Sega
SYSTEM	Genesis

THEME	Arcade
MEGABITS	8
PLAYERS	1-4
LEVELS	4

Sega's fleet-footed hedgehog has returned with a vengeance in **Sonic Spinball**, the first U.S. programmed Sonic game. This multi-screened multi-directional pinbal game was inspired by the Casino Night Zone sequence in **Sonic 2**.

The plot has Sonic's longtime enemy, Dr Robotnik, unleashing his most malevolent plot to date in his ongoing master plan to enslave Sonic's animal friends from the Planet Mobius and transform them into robots The evil scientist's invention, the Veg-O-Fortress, converts the jovial creatures into vapid slaves Sonic and Tails initiate an air assault, but are blasted out of the air Sonic, after tumbling into the water near the volcano fortress, is saved and guided to the Toxic Caves below the Fortress

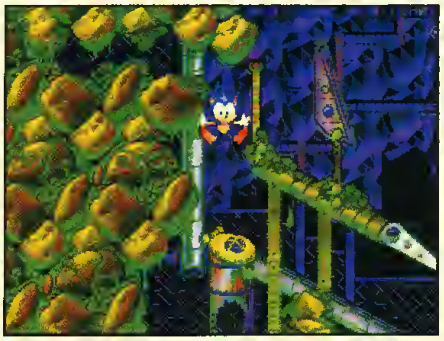
The Toxic Caves, which represent our hero's first incursion into the Fortress, are over-polluted caverns where Robotnik dumps his hazardous sewage. Sonic must remove Cluckbirds, Magma Worms, and barrels of toxic waste to find the Chaos Emeralds on this level Waiting for him to fall, preferably into its jaws, is the Rexxon monster

The Lava Powerhouse is next on Sonic's spin to the mouth of the spinball volcano. Floating Ferrons block the escape routes through Dr Robotnik's lava-powered generators, with an added twist involving steam jets as the flippers. Once Sonic slides past the bosses in the boiler room, he reaches The Machine At this level, Sonic must determine the Veg-O-Machine's secret so he can effect the release of his friends before they are turned into robots Once the Emeralds are collected from this level, the Fortress demolition begins.

At the Showdown Level Sonic must find the Chaos Emeralds and fight his way to Robotnik's ship, while the volcano collapses around him. Sonic then must go head to head against the malevolent Dr Robotnik in a winner-take-all finale.

The majority of **Sonic Spinball** takes place in the Pinball Defense System. a world of bumpers and drop targets. Pinball mavens may find the flipper configuration frustrating at first, since both the right and left flippers are controlled by the action buttons. In other video pinball games, control is invariably assigned to the control pad (left flipper) and one of the action buttons, to allow players to individually manipulate each flipper. In **Spinball**, however the direction pad is required to steer Sonic left or right as he experiences pinball freefall It's a trade-off that is likely to leave most players somewhat dissatisfied, but it's tough to envision an alternative.

In addition to jumping, ducking and looking up, Sonic has two major moves in his repertoire· the Super Spin Dash and the Cliffhanger Flip. The Super Spin Dash, similar to the Blast Processing seen in **Sonic 2**, gives Sonic an extra burst of speed, while the Cliffhanger Flip allows Sonic to grab onto ledges and flip himself up onto safe surfaces



Zap! Sonic makes a good pinball, but players still have to be careful.

The top of the screen contains the status strip. In addition to displaying the player designation, remaining lives and score, it also flashes important messages. For example, the strip reveals how many Chaos Emeralds are needed on the current level, as well as what's required to remove an obstacle to reach the Emerald It also imparts encouragement as well as bad news concerning Sonic s status.

Spinball's graphics and sound, while not as impressive as **Sonic 2**, are very good. The graphic images are crisp, nicely-colored and make excellent use of texture mapping to fashion a 3-D effect. Even the relative visual simplicity of the simulated pinball machine which appears in the bonus rounds is greatly enhanced by an impressive backdrop of Sonic's face superimposed against a city skyline. The sound and music effects not only maintain the game's internal rhythm but also provide audio game clues.

The ability to guide Sonic while in freefall should reduce the initial disappointment pin purists may have with the flipper control system Gamers who haven't played pin simulations should enjoy the game's non-traditional features After all this is Spinball, not pinball, and the differences are among this game's strengths. Sonic is back!

— Laurie Yates

What Makes Sonic Run?

Success, the adage tells us, has many parents, while failure is an orphan. For Sega, Sonic the Hedgehog has been its single most successful creation, so it's surprising to hear that no one takes credit for the "genesis" of **Sonic Spinball**.

"Basically, our consumers [generated the idea]," admitted Group Marketing Director Diane Adair-Fornasier. "After the release and immediate popularity of **Sonic 2**, we received an onslaught of phone calls and letters demanding a Sonic sequel based on the Casino Night Zone." As for the game's volcanic setting, Diane explained: "The volcano motif allowed us to carry the pinbal theme throughout **Sonic Spinball.** As Sonic travels up the volcano, the setting changes from an organic, natural environment to the industrial setting of Robotnik's world."

What was the toughest part of creating **Sonic Spinball**? According to designer Peter Morawiec, it was "the flawless incorporation of Sonic's feisty personality and irreverent attitude into the theme of a whirling pinball game, complete with flippers and bumpers."

How about marsupial hair in the drop targets?

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	95%
REPLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 93%

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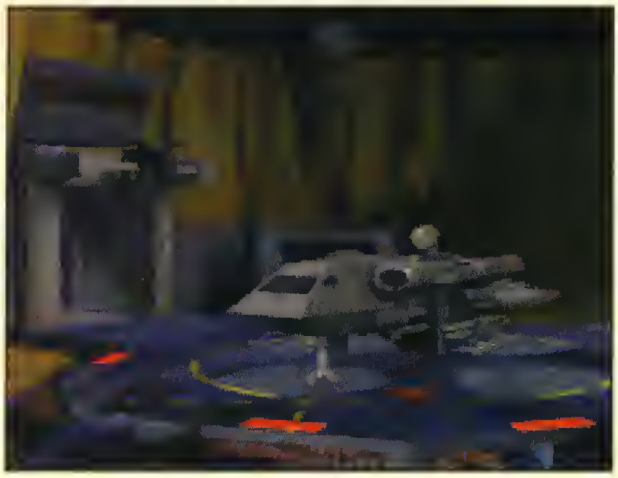
SOFTWRRE GRLLERY

Wing Commander Privateer

PUBLISHER	Origin Systems
DESIGNER	Joel Manners

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Flight Sim/Adventure
MIN. HD REQ.	29 MB (w/speech)
PLAYERS	1

Privateers are lured to their chosen profession for the freedom they suppose it holds for them. Looking for challenge and simplicity, uncomplicated with the politics and discipline of military life these men make an irreversible change of lifestyle. Once leading the life of a mercenary, pirate or merchant in the frontier one learns quickly that choices are there but good choices—choices that allow one to survive and prosper—



are few and far between n point of fact, the choices are rather limited when compared to the military counterpart.

The hero of **Privateer** is the player's alter ego who can be named and directed through the narrow and unforgiving plot ine of the destruction of an ancient Steltek weapon The story begins at New Detroit, with an ancient and priceless alien artifact left to the p-c by an

The player has the ability to equip his ship with a variety of special weapons.

assassinated benefactor and winds its way across the frontier in 24 separate missions with pirates gangsters a university bursar resistance leader a planetary exploratory service and finally, the Confederation Navy

Fail one mission and our hero is left adrift in space requiring the player to repeat the mission unti success or the plot line of the game is abandoned Unlike previous **Wing Commanders**, the game can be played independent of the plot line with dozens of missions randomly assigned by the computer The player is free to explore the other professions that the game has open even after all of the primary mission goals are completed. The plot is more involved and interesting than prior **Wing Commanders**, with deeper richer, and more entertaining characterizations.

There are four ships which may be equipped with three levels of shields weapons, sensor arrays and engines. The balance of these components must be carefully understood, making ship construction a game in itself. Space lane maps must also be purchased and added to the onboard computer to get around.

Not every one of the 68 star systems has a ship repair and upgrade facility so that travel out of the local system (once our hero can afford a jump drive , should be done cautiously, and not without a save game to get safely home. Each planet in a star system may specialize in agriculture, mining, pleasure pirates or refinery Al locations will have a commodity exchange, mission computer and bar

A good source of reliable missions can be found at the merchant or mercenary guild Simply pay the entrance fee and these mission brokers can provide the p-c with either merchant or mercenary missions for a guaranteed pay-off Profitable trade routes must be mapped meticulously to prevent losing money when using the commodity exchange while mercenary or merchant missions have a set price tag for performance. Smuggling contraband from pirate bases can result in a price on our hero's head, resulting in bounty hunters, militia and Confederation ships dogging his or her jets.

nterface and controls are of the standard clean-and-functional type that typify the **Wing Commander** series Graphics, sound effects, music and speech are very high quality and are entertaining. The personalities in the voice actors make the speech pack worth its cost, in dollars and hard drive space Ed Maurer felt that one of the missions was too difficult.

Many players favorite space game now has the most versatile professions available for the freelance alter ego. **Privateer** may be the best **Wing Commander** yet.

— Al Giovetti

An Interview with Ed Maurer

Ed Maurer, a casual guy, became Origin Privateer's lead programmer and project leader after others had tried but failed to complete the game. Ed plays Privateer as a mercenary, since he does not like to buy and sell goods, and has no interest in locating and exploiting profitable trade routes. Ed enjoys the pounding fire of a pulse cannon, the flash of an exploding torpedo, and the elimination of a horde of enemy space pilots.

Ed pointed out that he loves to battle the retros, a group of religious fanatics bent on destroying all who travel the space lanes. Retros have excellent and hard-to-anticipate combat skills, making them a true challenge. Ed especially enjoys hearing the retros scream "eat righteous fire!" as he picks them off using his lethally equipped Centurion star fighter.

COMPLEXITY	Complex
GRAPHICS	91%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	89%
REPLAYABILITY	89%

OVERALL 90%

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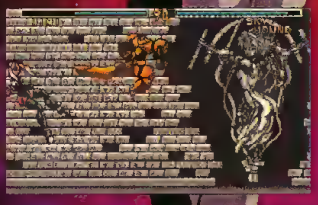

System requirements: 286-20 or faster machine (386 recommended) with 640K RAM, hard disk, joystick recommended. Operating Sys.. MS DOS 3.3 or above, Windows 3.1 Graphics compatible with VGA. Sound support: Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro, Thunder Board, Pro Audio Spectrum , Adlib Gold and Speed Master.

NR-13 This game is not for the faint-hearted. Contains violence and some material inappropriate for minors

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Homey D. Clown

PUBLISHER	Capstone
DESIGNER	Bob Coardy

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Arcade Adventure
MIN. HD REQ.	2 MB
PLAYERS	1

In Living Color was a Fox television smash hit, and one of the most recognizable personae created by show star Damon Wayans, is the "lovable" Homey D Clown The series has been cancelled but Homey lives on in a computer game Homey has been forced to wear the clown costume by a court judgement, but makes the best of it with his sarcastic attitude, which helps him cope with the humiliation

The game starts with a message from Homey's manager who says that if he beats his rival clown Klutzo to the audition he will get his own show with a six figure income and all the trappings that go with being a star Homey must traverse seven areas of city streets slums, parks, subways and office to get to the interview first.

The streets are ittered with tourists, speeding cabs, muggers bums, nasty receptionists and Klutzo s thugs. Homey must be able to side track these adversaries in real-time arcade action

"Homey don't play dat!" This is one clown that isn't joking around, folks!

The mouse gives smooth, positive control of Homey while the keyboard interface is slower and less precise

All action occurs in a top-down overhead angled perspective Homey has no defense, save avoidance of obstacles. Avoidance is achieved by luring the obstacle characters to one side of the street, backing out of range, and then coming back up the other side of the street quickly bypassing the other characters.

Homey can hold up to two dozen items in boxes, shown in the lower right-hand corner of the screen Homey must collect items in order to solve puzzles that will let him proceed in true treasure hunt-game fashion Hats, boxes and suits disguise Homey helping him get past certain villains. Other villains require special gifts to take them off the trail (Homey's talcum powder-filled sock is virtually useless, it simply serves as "comic relief"

Homey has to overcome the odds and "beat the man" to get his show.

The graphics in Homey will not win any prizes, being simple and two-dimensional They are cartoon-like without any real attempt at high art. Colors are bright red blue yellow, orange and green Some shading is used to give the characters a flat, three-dimensional feel. The angled top-down view leaves certain areas obscured by the surrounding walls buildings and trees.

Music and sound will certainly not win any awards for Homey either The most satisfying thing about the simple music and effects is that they can be turned off when they become annoyingly repetitious, by bringing up the options with a single hot-key macro. Quitting, saving and restoring games is easy with the use of hot-key menus. The player may find it difficult to label the eight save games, however

One good feature of the game is the lack of hard disk space consumed The game comes on two low density disks and installs in less than 2 megabytes of hard disk space A small amount of free RAM is also needed (570KB).

The 16-page manual is a marvel of simplicity containing no background information for the story There is only some discussion of the simple commands needed to play the game and a smal description of the characters and places. The game would not have suffered if there had been no manual since the commands are easy enough to learn without it.

Most adventure games have some form of an overal mapping system to keep track of location throughout the game Homey uses a tourist map that may be obtained from the tourist bureau just about halfway through the game The tourist map is not a substitute for an auto-mapping system, but it is another feature that adds to the overall argument that Homey is an adventure game as wel as an arcade game.

Homey is quite similar to the large number of uncomplicated easy-to-play Windows desk-top games that seem to be played more out of boredom than out of involvement with the story **Homey** is a simple game which may appeal to those who like arcade games, but wish to have a puzzle game as well Many adventure gamers will be disappointed with *Homey* and are advised to pass it up.

— Al Giovetti

Interview with Amy Smith
Director, Product Development

Amy Smith, director of Capstone product development, hopes to fill the needs of the new, technically unsophisticated computer buyers who prefer Windows to DOS, and are buying casual games in increasing numbers.

Amy explained, " developed **Homey D. Clown** to be a simple, uncomplicated game with an easy-to-use and easy-to-learn interface, which does not require a large manual and numerous commands to memorize."

COMPLEXITY	Simple
GRAPHICS	71%
SOUND	71%
PLAYABILITY	80%
REPLAYABILITY	60%

OVERALL 75%

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Microsoft Arcade

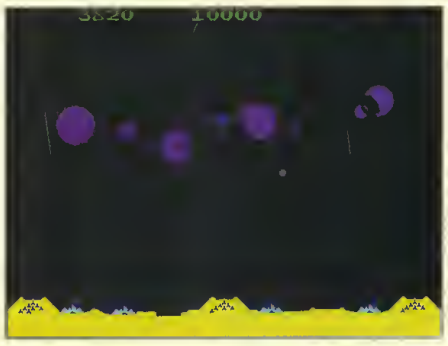
PUBLISHER	Microsoft
DESIGNER	Atari

PLATFORM	Windows
THEME	Action
MIN. HD REQ.	5 MEG
PLAYERS	1-2

Dark rooms Flashing lights and erratic sounds. Young men and women clad in tight jeans. The smell of greasy pizza in the air

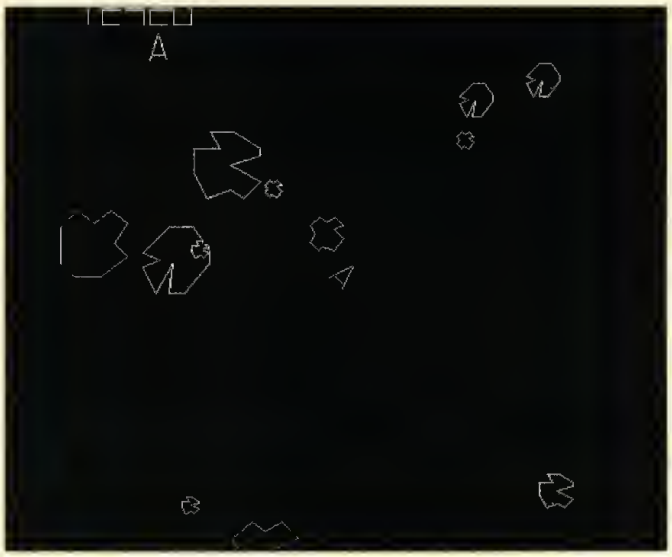
It was in this environment where video gaming thrived the arcades of the early 1980s Thankfully, for those of us too young to appreciate such surroundings Microsoft has compiled the **Microsoft Arcade**, a collection of five of the most famous and successful coin-op games from that era **Asteroids**, **Battle Zone**, **Centipede**, **Missile Command** and **Tempest**. And while the programs may seem a bit crude when compared to modern offerings, the accuracy of the translations and the nclusion of some great extras make this package a winner

What first strikes a player who has experienced any or al of these games before is the precision with which Microsoft has handled these translations. Each one is n terms of graphics and sound, a duplicate of the original And while the same cannot be said for the game play it still comes reasonably close

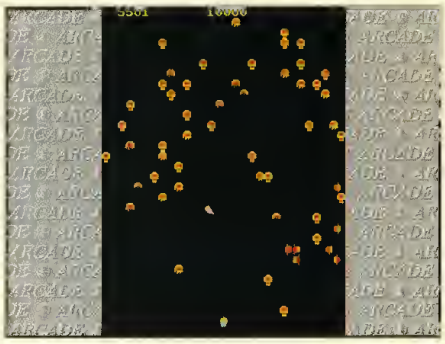


Bonus City! Test your old skills at Missile Command, just like the arcade!

Asteroids holds up fairly wel , despite its age. The classic game—which places the player in control of a single ship in the middle of an asteroid field, shooting the rocks until they are obliterated—is still a lot of fun to play. The look of the vector graphics is so abnormal to the modern gamer's eye that one finds it visually stimulating, despite its simplicity And the tension of the game is sti present, making this a very exciting—if stressful—contest.



Battle Zone doesn't do as well Its first-person tank theme has been built upon many times, most recently by Dynamix's update of **Stellar 7** and the release of its sequel, **Nova 9**. The strategy elements of the game are so weak that this proved to be a fairly uninteresting exercise.



Can you stop the never-ending swarms of beasties roaming in Centipede?

Centipede also seems overly simplistic when compared to recent efforts. There is little variation in the game play, and the audio/visuals are just not stimulating. It proves to be a bit better than **Battle Zone**, but is still mediocre.

Missile Command is simply beautiful Few games today capture the sheer terror that the player feels as he controls three missile sites, protecting six cities from the onslaught of wave after wave of enemy missiles The constantly changing background colors sometimes make for some eye-straining combinations but that's what you get with an accurate translation

It is **Tempest**, though, which proves to be the true diamond of this offering. The combination of excellent multi-colored vector graphics, fast game play, and ever-changing playscreens make it the most exciting of the bunch The only thing which hampers this is the controls. the original used a paddle, and while the mouse is adequate, it still feels a bit awkward.

Wisely, Microsoft added some great extras which help increase the player's interest. The ability to change game parameters is greatly appreciated· although they aren't so flexible as to make a game a complete piece of cake they can assist a player having some trouble with the difficulty level And the strategy sections can give some great tips to help novices.

But the really special feature **MA** offers is the Game Histories. Microsoft went above and beyond by interviewing the original designers, providing some fascinating insights into the early history of gaming. One can spend hours just scrolling through the tales of the creation of each one of these games.

On their own probably none of these games could have made a successful package But the inclusion of five different classic titles, along with the fascinating stories of their creation, make this a title every gamer, young or old, should take a look at. It provides a great insight into gaming's vibrant history

— Ed Finkler

COMPLEXITY	Easy
GRAPHICS	65%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	90%
REPLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 90%

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

D&D: Stronghold

PUBLISHER	SSI
DESIGNER	Stormfront Studios

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG/STRATEGY
MIN. HD REQ.	2 MB
PLAYERS	1

This game isn't just an adventure it's a job. In **Stronghold**, SSI has ntroduced role playing in true Dungeons & Dragons tradition The playing field isn't a castle, it's the entire kingdom and the player runs the whole shooting match Whether he s feeding the population or fighting off monsters, the player through the auspices of different characters, must build the kingdom and lead the people to peace and prosperity It's not an easy task; there are a lot of decisions to be made

Once the introduction has played out, and the player has not only chosen a world but decided whether it will be peaceful aggressive or hostile the next step is to invent the key characters. The primary leader must be a Baron or Baroness, and under him/her are five lesser leaders chosen from a list of standard D&D folk: Mages Elves Dwarves and so on Each leader chooses a location for his or her stronghold and sets about building a kingdom. As the population grows, the leader must figure out how to feed the people house them protect them from enemies and monsters, plus make enough money to do all of this Time passes, going from season to season and the kingdom grows If the leaders have done their jobs the kingdom will be strong and healthy, and the Baron/Baroness will have accomplished the goal set out for him/her at the beginning of the game If not—famine, pestilence, plague subjugation, decimation by monsters and some fairly disgruntled people It's not a pretty picture.

The playing field is viewed through a large "postcard" window with a smaller one to the right of the screen Each of these holds a different view which can be toggled back and forth at the player's whim one overhead a bird's-eye perspective of the kingdom, the other at ground-level, where the leader of that particular **Stronghold** can build or farm, or mine or ask his subjects how they are faring. The wise leader asks often The player also has the option of choosing which of three activities—building, recruiting or training—the people are spending most of their time doing. The ratio can be even, one third for each task, or more time can be spent on one than the others. This means buildings can get built quicker, or fighters can be trained quicker

A mouse is an absolute must for this game—you re going to have enough to do without trying to remember which key does what! The music is fine, with different themes for each leader's stronghold and the sound effects are good The graphics are up to SSI s usual excellent standards, but there s nothing new or eye-popping about them The documentation must be read carefully and a hint book would be an excellent idea.

This game doesn't take hours to play it takes days or weeks—maybe even months. Like a good book, **Stronghold** continues to involve the player even when the computer is off While she carries on the mundane duties of daily life, a small section in the back of her brain is wondering whether the gold mine in Jack the Dwarf's backyard is exhausted yet, or whether Simon the Mage s forest should be cut down to produce more

In Stronghold, you must provide the wise leadership to build a kingdom.

housing. And are there any more dragons in the Southern Wilderness? And what about Baroness Roxanne? When wi she attack, and from what direction? And what the heck am I going to do about that little thief Fafnir? Join in **Stronghold**, and answer for yourself

— Sara Slaymaker

COMPLEXITY	Intricate
GRAPHICS	85%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	95%
REPLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 95%

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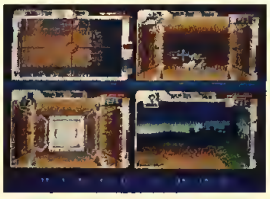
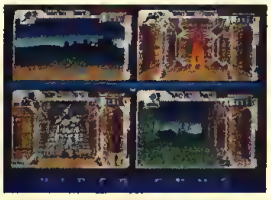
Hired Guns is an adventure that can accommodate up to four players simultaneously It features furious non-stop action, first person 3-D view and auto-mapping of the 1 7 million cubic meters of play area. Choose from 12 different richly developed characters to suit your needs for the mission at hand. Journey through this desolate land, all the while testing your survival skills. And remember· TAKE NO PRISONERS!





Hired Guns is available on IBM compatible and Amiga formats.

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Speed Racer

PUBLISHER	Accolade
DESIGNER	Tom Loughry

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Racing
MIN. HD REQ.	9 MB
PLAYERS	1 or 2

Many television viewers who now own computers grew up watching *Speed Racer* and all of the other after-school shows in the late '60s and '70s. *Marine Boy Spider-Man, the Banana Splits, Space Giants* and *Ultra Man* all come from this same television era. How nostalgic it must be for young adults to discover classic *Speed Racer* episodes and a brand new series on MTV!

This same nostalgia resurfaces on home computers courtesy of Accolade and its newest PC product, **Speed Racer in "The Challenge of Racer X."** Although Accolade managed to reproduce the look, sounds and atmosphere of the animated cartoons the poor response to player controls and lack of clearly-defined road, car and obstacle collision boundaries send the quality of this racing game back a decade or two

Speed Racer's game system works a lot ke that of the Off-Road series of games. Each race consists of 12

Players receive a TV-like intro to the next episode they will see in the game.

competitors Players must finish in the top three positions to gain points. After each race, players can use these points to upgrade features on their cars and add new functions when affordable.

These features are many of the special abilities that Speed Racer's car (the Mach 5) had in the cartoons. The tire jacks allow Speed Racer to jump obstacles and cars, while the rotary chopper blades can cut through trees and disable competitors vehicles. Successive levels have longer tracks more obstacles and meaner opponents.

The atmosphere of the series accompanies the game as well Each of the characters puts in an appearance or two. Players even equip their cars at "Pops", Racer's garage. They can also drive Racer X's car, the Shooting Star, if the Mach 5 gets boring. The choices of tracks and challengers keep **Speed Racer** interesting, although still difficult to play

Each race begins with an episode screen that describes the racing situation and opponents. The screen also offers tips for outfitting the car. There are seven levels of play in **Speed Racer.** A successful race on each of the six tracks finishes a level. In the Two-Player Modes the screen splits across the middle for exciting simultaneous play.

Players must build up points through repeated races in order to last for more than a level or two. Pops Test Track is a good track to try to accumulate points easily. Some of the other tracks like Danger Pass are far more unforgiving.

Players can drive the Mach 5 or Shooting Star with keyboard, mouse or joystick, but none seem to offer much control over the race The cars are simply not responsive enough **Speed Racer** may work much better with video game controllers than a computer's controls.

Another major problem with the game is the number of crashes in a race There are so many obstacles, extra vehicles and unexpected terrain changes that crashes are unavoidable Also, the cars don't "feel" as if they've touched an obstacle The result is a confused driver who doesn't know whether to move out of the way or push forward The road's limits are also not well-defined. Cars may fly through trees or water at one curve and inexplicably crash in another

Ignoring the poor game play for a minute, players wil enjoy the crisp graphics and many sound bites that establish **Speed Racer** as an accurate recreation of the cartoons. The tracks backgrounds are backgrounds from the cartoons and the tracks themselves each have their own distinct look.

Accolade also included some scenes from original cartoons in the introduction and at the end of levels. They wil certainly bring back memories. The digitized voices of various characters spout al kinds of expressions from different episodes and play in synch with the video monitor on the dashboard

The one noticeable absence is the complete original theme It would have worked nicely instead of the sti l acceptable) instrumental version supplied by the game s musician

Accolade successfully picked the right elements, scenes and digitized sayings for **Speed Racer** but lost their momentum in the game play department. The point system and race schedule work quite well as the basis for a great game but the frustration during a race will discourage further trials Racing game fans should avoid this product, but *Speed Racer* completists will find enough here to make this game worth their while as long as they are prepared to crash more often than Speed ever did on TV

GO, Speed Racer, GO!

— *Russ Ceccola*

COMPLEXITY	Intricate
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	70%
REPLAYABILITY	75%

OVERALL 80%

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SEE JACK DEAL.
SEE JACK STEAL.
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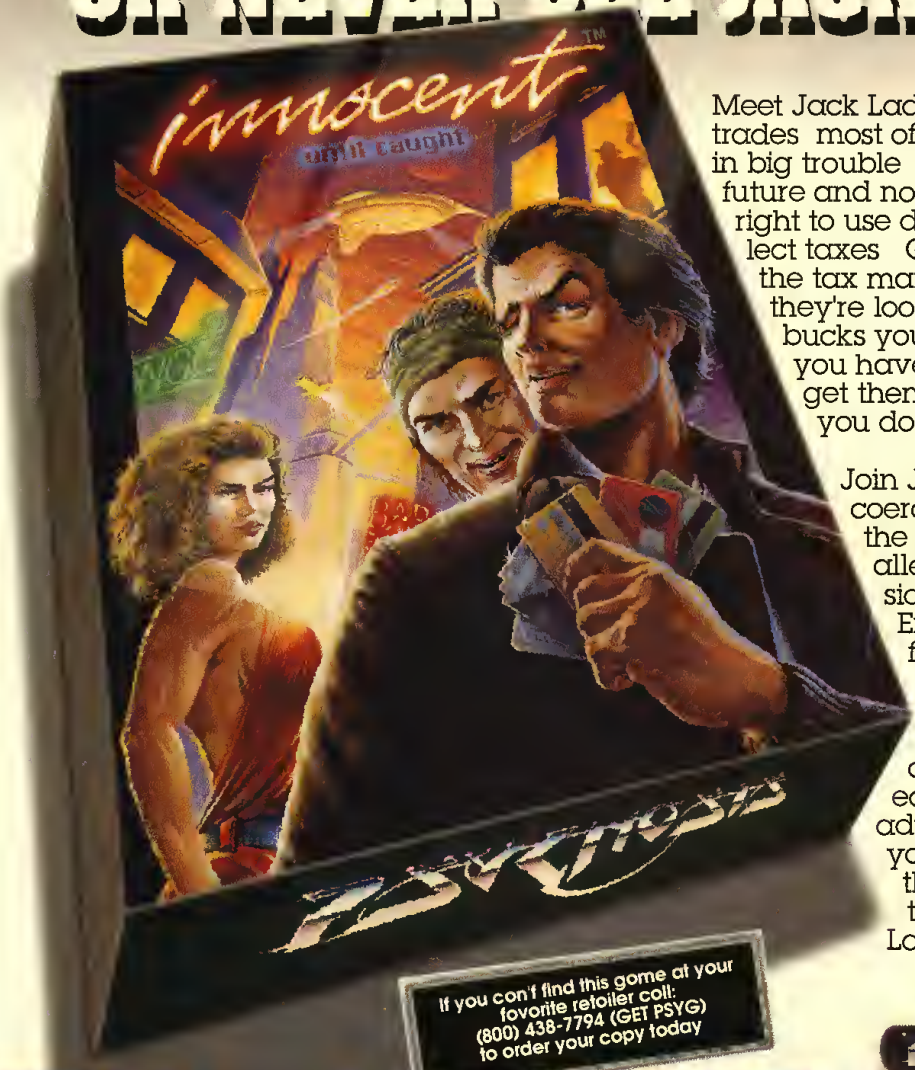

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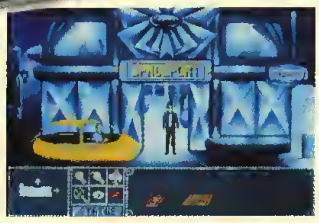

Innocent is available on IBM compatible and Amiga formats.

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SOFTWRRE GALLERY

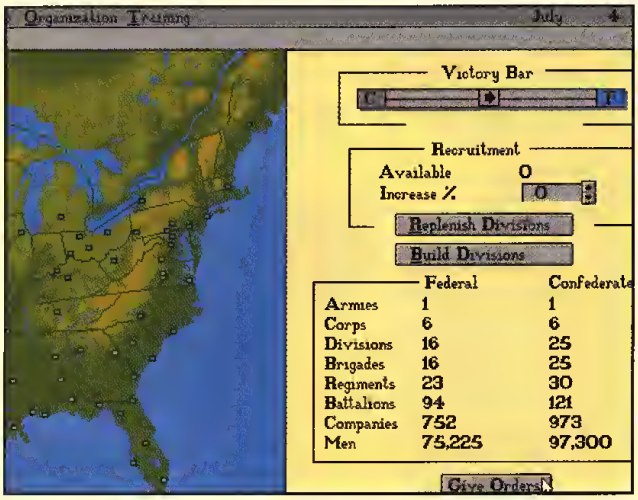
The Blue & The Gray

PUBLISHER	Impressions
DESIGNER	Edward Grabowski

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Wargame
MIN. HD REQ.	4 MEG
PLAYERS	1

It is a conflict known by many names, the most prevalent being the Civil War Those who believe that there was nothing civil about that war are more likely to refer to it as the War Between the States or even the War of Northern Aggression Many of the latter are often accused of continuing the conflict to this very day Regardless of one s beliefs on the origin or outcome of the Civil War all would agree that no other single conflict in this young nation s history spawns such passion and interest among the descendants of the participants

This interest carries over into the wargaming community as well where new games about the era are eagerly anticipated Recent news has included at least five games in development or discussion at the major houses, but Edward Grabowski's **The Blue & The Gray** is the first to actually grace computer screens.



A combination of strategic maneuver and tactical finesse built around micro-miniature rules, **Blue & Gray** has enough depth to captivate the most seasoned veterans of the genre.

A single historical battle is provided as a semi-tutorial, the First Battle of Bull Run At the beginning of campaign play unit strengths, resources and positions are accurate with historical records. From that point forward players have every opportunity to rewrite history Each turn represents one week of activity, during which the commander may move units, fortify positions, destroy railroad tracks and scout enemy positions using cavalry Whenever two units attempt to enter the same terrain a battle begins.

Battles may be resolved automatically for those who prefer a purely strategic game or executed in detail using Napoleonic-style miniature rules Experienced generals fare much better under the latter option A perfect example of this involves units of elite Confederate Cavalry conducting a rear guard defense for the retreating main body

Prepare for battle as the Union forces try to extract the Confederate troops.

The Cavalry was faced by Union Infantry with nominal Cavalry support and a numerical advantage of three to one After using the save option, the engagement was first computer controlled, resulting in defeat and retreat of the Confederate units with 60 percent casualties. Taking the reins in hand as it were, the same battle was manually won by using the superior skills and mobility of the Cavalry to harass the Union flanks until they were forced to withdraw

Controlling formations requires a bit of practice, because the manual neglects a few important details, but trial and error prevails. Once mastered the miniature system and combat modeling are actually quite impressive

Supplies and recruits become available at the first of every month Delaying their arrival by three months allows for more training, which is beneficial whenever the tactical situation permits it. Recruits can be used to form new units at any city which has not changed hands during the game, or to replenish existing divisions. Logistics become a consideration when the player elects to use optional extended supply rules for units operating behind enemy lines

The Blue & The Gray is a very satisfying look at the Civil War Purists may miss the ability to actually set up exact unit dispositions for complicated actions like Gettysburg, but they will appreciate the loyalty the system maintains to the essence of combat during the period

Ed Dille

Interview with Edward Grabowski

"I've played miniatures for about 20 years, so this system has been influenced by a lot of different rules. The closest ancestor of **The Blue & Gray** model is a game I did about three years ago called **Rourke's Drift**.

I agree totally with your assessment of the Autoplay feature. It is much more numerically based, with only a few set patterns to draw from in the resolution of the battle. Human players who become familiar with the system bring much more variety of approach and can usually best the computer's results.

As to specific battles, we are working on the first battleset, which will include Gettysburg, Antietam and 2nd Bull Run, as well as an option for modem play. At some point we will also probably release a scenario editor, much like the development tool I am using now, so players can create their own battles, as well as smaller portions of larger battles, such as focusing strictly on Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg."

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	82%
SOUND	92%
PLAYABILITY	88%
REPLAYABILITY	95%

OVERALL 87%

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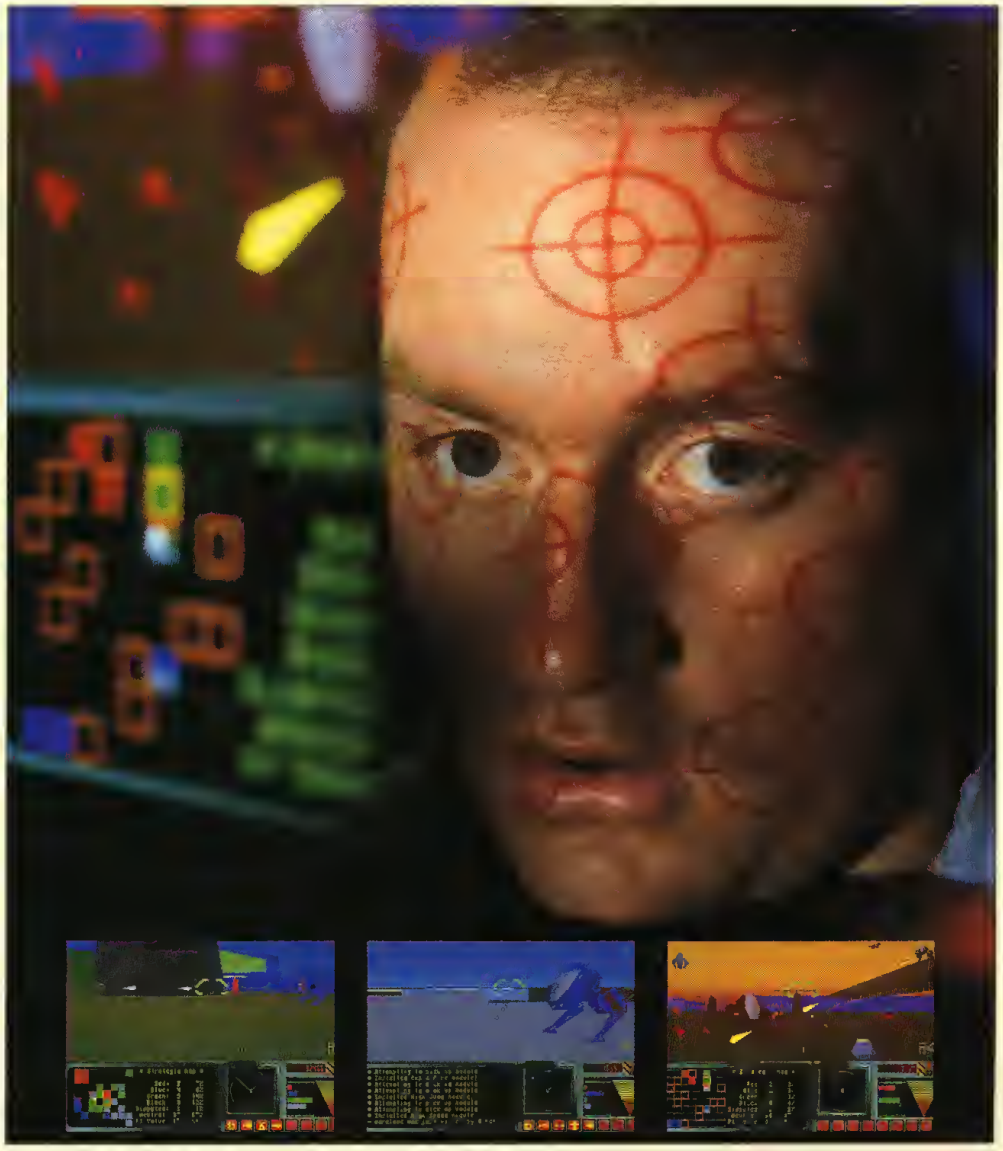

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SIMUTRONICS CORPORATION

SOFTWARE GALLERY

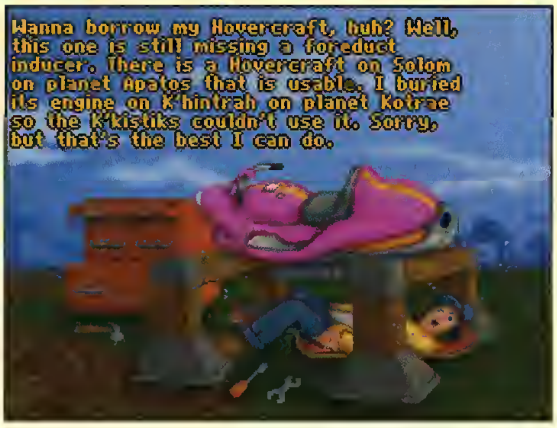
Strike Squad

PUBLISHER	Mindcraft
DESIGNER	Bonifaciao, Burke, Somerville, Atabek

PLATFORM	Atabek
THEME	MS-DOS
MIN. HD REQ.	18 MEG
PLAYERS	1-2

Strike Squad is unequivocally Mindcraft's strongest product in recent history Set in the distant future, the game blends elements of action, strategy adventure and role-playing games into a cohesive whole that will appeal to a broad cross section of gamers Players assume the role of a successful mercenary commander, already equipped with a star ship, a crew of skilled warriors and an adequate but not flush, bank account.

K'kisitik's have destroyed your home planet and loved ones, thereby establishing themselves as the villains of the plot line while providing motivation to the central character at the same time. As with all good villains, it will take some time to track them down for the major confrontation In the interim a fair amount of planet-hopping is necessary to meet important NPCs, find necessary items and build the squad s experience.



At any star system the first task is to determine a planet, and then a city on that planet, as a destination Inside the mother ship, commanders determine which four members of their squad will deploy to the surface Each mercenary possesses different skills and weaponry, so the player must make these judgements based on what they expect to find below Also, each mercenary gets paid a different amount to be part of the away team so economic factors can influence tactics. Without cash flow to pay the squad and purchase equipment, the game ends. To make money the player can locate and sell objects, such as taking weaponry from dead opponents, as well as complete certain objectives

On the planet's surface all action occurs from a three-quarters top-down perspective with the roofs of buildings absent to allow full view of the interiors, even when outside the structure. The ability to have such a full overview of the battlefield is attributed to surveillance. Only a portion of the area is viewable in the central screen at a time By moving the mouse cursor to the edge of the display the view automatically scrolls in the selected direction

One member of the squad acts as leader and is directly controlled by the player The other characters follow this one, but control al of their other actions as individuals. The attitude of the squad as a unit is controlled via a single toggle: engage or ignore. If set to engage the squad attacks everything in sight, perhaps even unintended targets. If set to ignore the men attempt to avoid contact.

Although keyboard control is supported, the mouse driven interface is smooth and simple to master Vertical bars of command icons flank the main display allowing quick access to all of the standard commands ike drop, take, give and so on Further, when the cursor is position over an NPC that has something to say the pointer changes to a talk bubble that prompts the player to interact.

Two-Player Mode allows either head-to-head combat or cooperative play with one character controlled by the mouse and the other by the keyboard The intent is never to draw players too far away from the main story line, so the engagements are inked for continuity as opposed to being stand-alone battles.

Overal the record for hybrid games has been dismal because they attempt to appeal to such a broad audience base that they never really fill the needs of each given segment. Fortunately **Strike Squad** appears to have enough depth to avoid this common pitfall If that assessment is also supported by players, then the K kisitik don't stand a chance

— Ed Dille

Interview with Designer Ali Atabek

"When we set out to do Strike Squad, we wanted to create a strategy game that also appealed to action players, plus we wanted to give it more eye appeal than similar games, like **Breach.** Roger's background is in action games, so he had a lot of influence on the final handling of squad members, who are more autonomous than one would expect from a strategy game. We decided that independent real time combat more properly reflected what a well trained group of mercenaries would do in a given situation than turn—based combat, in which the player controls their every move. At the same time, we knew that some players hate real time combat, so we provided a turn-based option for them. The turn-based engine, though a little clumsy, wi also appeal to players who view the team as their alter ego, and each member of that team a component of the whole."

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	89%
REPLAYABILITY	80%

OVERALL 87%

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SOFTWRRE GRLLERY

Dracula

PUBLISHER	Psygnosis Ltd.
DESIGNER	Mike Simpson, Tag

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Action Adventure
MIN. HD REQ.	3 MEG
PLAYERS	1

Francis Ford Coppola s film has generated a resurgence of interest in Bram Stoker's ancient vampire Some products which have emerged on the coat tails of this film are completely faithful to Mr Stoker's characterization Others, such as this game, are capitalizing on the name recognition of *Dracula* and have ittle kinship to the original In fact, this **Dracula** s inspiration seems to have stemmed from **Castle Wolfenstein.**

Players become Jonathan Harker The objective is to locate and destroy Dracula. Along the way Harker encounters many minions who must also be dispatched. They're easy to find, since they gravitate toward the current location to do battle There are a lot of these opponents but, fortunately, they tend to shamble along slowly easy targets for Harker's gun.

Harker carries a semi-automatic and several clips of silver bullets to deal with these adversaries. If all bullets are expended the creatures must be faced in close combat with only a knife for protection Spare clips of bullets, holy wafers and food are scattered throughout the levels to allow the player to replenish

The first objective in each stage must be finding the coffins on the level and destroying them by breaking a holy wafer into the glowing dirt. The earth within each coffin acts as a portal through which Dracula s minions may pass, and creatures continue to appear until the player destroys al the coffins in a given stage.

The first stage is comprised of a forest level and two underground levels A gold key must be found before entering the catacombs, and other keys play important parts in later stages as well In this stage, 53 coffins must be destroyed before Harker confronts Dracula in his earliest incarnation that of Vlad the Impaler

The 3-D first-person perspective allows the player to become part of the action.

The second stage, with six levels, commences at Carfax Abbey The exit point of the stage is the portcullis directly opposite the entry point to the first level Before going there, Harker must destroy 72 coffins and obtain the Crystal key from Dracula, who at this point appears as a Victorian gentleman

The final stage takes place in Transylvania at Dracula s Castle. Four levels must be explored to find the four Night keys which grant access to the vampire s inner sanctum Again 72 coffins must be destroyed to eliminate Dracula s source of power before the final confrontation can occur In this phase the vampire appears as the demon Nosferatu

All action occurs from a first-person perspective identical to the 3-D display movement and combat controls of **Castle Wolfenstein**. Harker's arm extends into the frame and skews left or right when turning. The mouse cursor marks the direction of travel and a simple left click executes the action It may also be used to target creatures and fire the gun via a right click. An inventory bar is along the bottom of the screen At the top of the frame are two windows, one which displays Harker's life force and the other the number of coffins left in the stage

Even though **Dracula** only pays p service to the original story, and lacks originality of design, it still rates high It's a simple explanation "The play's the thing," and purchasers will not be disappointed in the play value of the product. **Dracula** is a fast-paced action game that maintains involvement for 50-75 hours. Further it is a great example of the types of games which work well with the upcoming PC version of the Virtual Reality Stuntmaster and other VR head gear

— *Ed Dille*

Mark Tsai, Director U.S. Product Development

Actually, your observations to the *Dracula* tie-in are correct. We had the rights to *Dracula* for some time and weren't sure what to do with them. We had a group working on a texture mapping engine and they just happened to design one around a horror theme, so the connection seemed natural.

The similarities to **Wolfenstein** are there, but we are not the first to emulate that product. Just look at the **Ultima Underworld** titles. We don't see any problems resulting from that similarity as we have a good relationship with that company. In fact, we are the U.K. distributors for **Spear of Destiny**.

As to the implications for VR, we didn't have that specifically in mind when **Dracula** was in design, but we are glad to hear that it works well on the early helmets We do have a VR specific product in the works based on our fractal engine technology.

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	92%
REPLAYABILITY	85%

OVERALL 92%

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Metal and Lace

PUBLISHER	Megatech Software
DESIGNER	Erwin Mab, Kenny Wu

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	Arcade Fighting
MIN. HD REQ.	16 MB
PLAYERS	1 or 2

Earth in the year 2053 is a world that extols peace and love, like some nauseating global Grateful Dead concert. Contact sports, 1-900 numbers and Beavis & Butt-Head are now banned as violent and unhealthy influences, leaving the citizens of the world in a loving, zombified stupor Mercifully there's still one place where a guy can go to seek the thrill of deadly combat: MeCha Beach, an island paradise known for its beautiful women

and its blood sport—Robo Fighting.

Megatech, the folks who gave us **Cobra Mission**, now present **Metal & Lace: The Battle of the Robo Babes**, a fighting game for the PC with a raunchy sense of humor, alluring Anime artwork and what may just be the coolest title of all time.

The original Japanese design was a simple strip-battle game· whenever a Robo Babe was defeated the player got to see her minus an article of clothing.

But Megatech has fleshed out (ouch!) the concept to appeal to a larger market. The game's NR-13 rating means no nudity, but the subject matter may still be inappropriate for players under the age of 13.

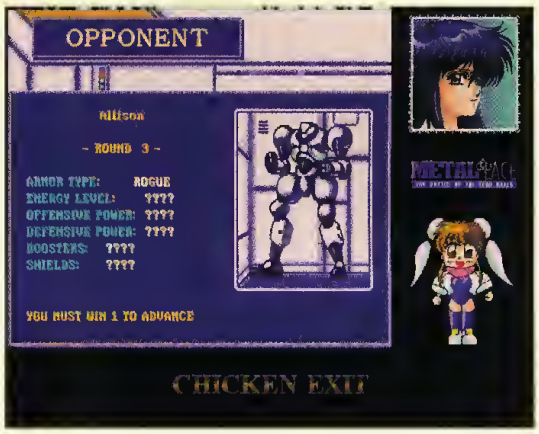
New arrivals to MeCha Island will find themselves at the Bar Boom-Boom, a seedy watering hole and dance club from which all areas of the game are accessed. It is here that the seven Robo Babes pass the time and make money to keep their Robo Armor in top condition. As feisty as they are beautiful all must be defeated in four separate tournaments before players can face Gunder, the World Ultimate Champion of Robo Fighting.

Boom-Boom is a fun place to hang out. Its denizens are amusing and friendly and even the inanimate objects have personalities (as well as some of the most dreadful accents ever recorded). Players start out with $5,000 to blow on beer and armor and a quick trip upstairs to Armor 'R' Us gives them a choice of seven different Robo Armors. All armors have common moves as well as their own unique combinations and special attacks. Players may buy as many armors as they can afford and may sell them back when times get tight.

Downstairs from the bar is the Old Man's Workshop where Power-Ups like Batteries, Energy Shields and Artificial Intelligence Chips may be purchased. Many of these items are only good for one fight so stock up while keeping a careful eye on your finances—a killer suit of armor isn't much good if you haven't got the $150 Tournament fee.

Once equipped, players may either fight a friend or go straight for the Robo Babes. Each Babe has two armors and must be defeated in both of them in order to advance. Tipping Mia, the towel girl, will reveal what armor your opponent is planning to use Then select the appropriate armor and powe-ups to counter the imposing challenge

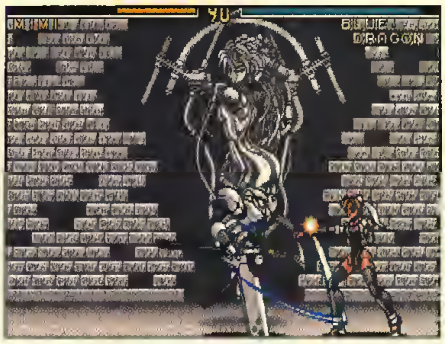
Battle takes place against a variety of simple but attractive backdrops and while this isn't exactly state-of-the-art stuff, it s not bad. Besides, unlike **Street Fighter II**'s Chun Li and **Mortal Kombat**'s Sonya Blade, at least the Robo Babes aren't trying to kill you.



They're happy just to heap on humiliation in the inevitable early defeats.

At the end of each tournament, players will face one of four Ultimate Champions, all Robo Fighting Hall of Famers. After every two triumphant tournaments, players are rewarded with fetching Anime illustrations of the defeated Robo Babes. An NR-18 upgrade, available to registered users, features two additional graphics of each Babe, in considerably more erotic (and partially nude) poses

Digitized voices add to the enjoyment and while the music becomes irritating, it may be turned off **Metal & Lace** offers



The RoboBabes pull no punches when taking on their vicious opponents.

a wide range of control options, including the 4- button ThrustMaster and the Gravis GamePad (highly recommended).

At a time when most games are becoming impossibly complex, it's nice to see one that sticks to the basics· Beer and Robo Babes—what a life!

— *Scott Wolf*

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	89%
SOUND	81%
PLAYABILITY	91%
REPLAYABILITY	84%

OVERALL 89%

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SOFTWARE GALLERY

Daemonsgate

PUBLISHER	EID
DESIGNER	Imagitec

PLATFORM	MS-DOS
THEME	RPG
MIN. HD REQ.	8MB
PLAYERS	1

Here am wandering around town, looking for a good place to stay, and for some interesting people who may want to join me for some adventuring. Nobody seems to know where the Thieves Guild is, and more to the point, they don't seem to appreciate my asking about such things. Well, thieves may not be entirely honest, but they sure do make getting in locked doors easier People around town have a tendency to gossip and I have managed to pick up quite a bit of new information Soon I will take my party outside of the city's confines and into some real adventure!

Snap into reality· 3:00 am The sound of my wife calling from the bedroom, wondering if have been swallowed by my computer or if I am still sitting there voluntarily She warns against the latter It would seem that have been wandering around the town for almost eight hours. Eight hours of doing nothing accept talking to people and practicing. It occurs to me that the game I am playing, the game I would really like to get most of the way through before I write my review is massive Eight hours into most RPGs would have yielded several dungeons, quite a bit of treasure, and a bunch of increased levels. had not left the first town

When Piglet (a nickname of one of the developers of the game—don't ask) came to the offices to show us **Daemonsgate**, he made several lofty claims Five thousand NPCs to interact with over 45,000 screens in which to travel. All of this for under 8MB of hard disk space Piglet promised a real RPG, much closer to the pen-and-paper type. He guaranteed a game ful of humor and one so complex that we may indeed spend days on end getting through it.

He also promised that it would be simple to play and would sport an advanced interface to make the game painless to figure out.

The following week when I received my copy for review, I was overjoyed to find that almost every one of his promises and guarantees were completely true

The graphics in **Daemonsgate** are simple and rough It is easiest to compare them to a game such as **Ultima VI** While

There are many battle options available, including a computer controlled fight.

they are not poor, they are also not state of the art. One must remember though, that this game is actually a couple of years old There were problems in both the finishing and distribution aspects of this game Many will remember this as a game which was going to be distributed by GameTek and was heavily advertised in the summer and fall of 1992.

The game is also not a powerhouse for sound While the music and the effects are good, they are also not as good as they could have been. Don't expect to see them on Billboard's Top 10 anytime soon.

However gamers should not let the few negatives (if indeed they are negatives) deter them from buying this game

As stated before, the game is huge. There are thousands of people to talk to and quite a few who will join you on your journey The game is set up so that players can take many smaller side-adventures and explore the land completely rather than just play the game through.

Exploring and adventuring are indeed the emphasis of this game The towns are more ike cities and include many different Inns, Taverns, Guilds and Shops. Players can train in the towns, get supplies, find nifty items, have a good meal, and find companions to journey with

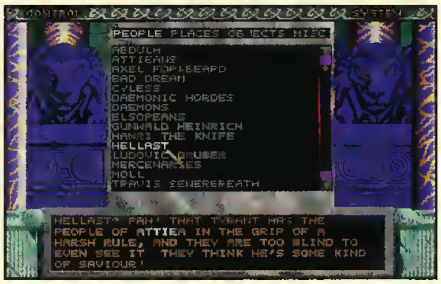
Outside of the town there are more places to explore and tons of things to fight.

The main story revolves around the Daemons but this game encompasses so much more that the story actually takes on a lesser importance There is so much to do with your characters and so many things to move the game along, that the game no longer relies on the story to make or break it. It may sound strange to say that the game manages to become greater than the sum of its parts, but that is indeed what happens.

Players will learn about Daemonology Herbalism and Elementalism. Characters will travel over land and sea: they will hunt and forage for food and when they bed down for the night, someone will stand guard All in all, this is as close to real adventuring as one can get.

The game allows the main character to gain knowledge As questions are asked and answered, the answers are stored in the *Knowledge* menu These answers can be called on at any time in the game, which eliminates much of the need for note taking.

The only thing really missing from the game is a good auto-mapping function. However the game does come with a set of maps for many of the areas.



Knowledge is important. Fortunately, your character doesn't forget anything.

Daemonsgate is a role-players dream It is a complex and masterfully done game which must be experienced to be appreciated It remains fresh and well written throughout and the variety it presents is nothing short of astonishing. For someone looking for something a little different, this is it.

Oh one quick hint—for good weapons, try the Marital Aids Shop.

Marc Camron

COMPLEXITY	Very Complex
GRAPHICS	78%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	96%
REPLAYABILITY	84%

OVERALL 94%

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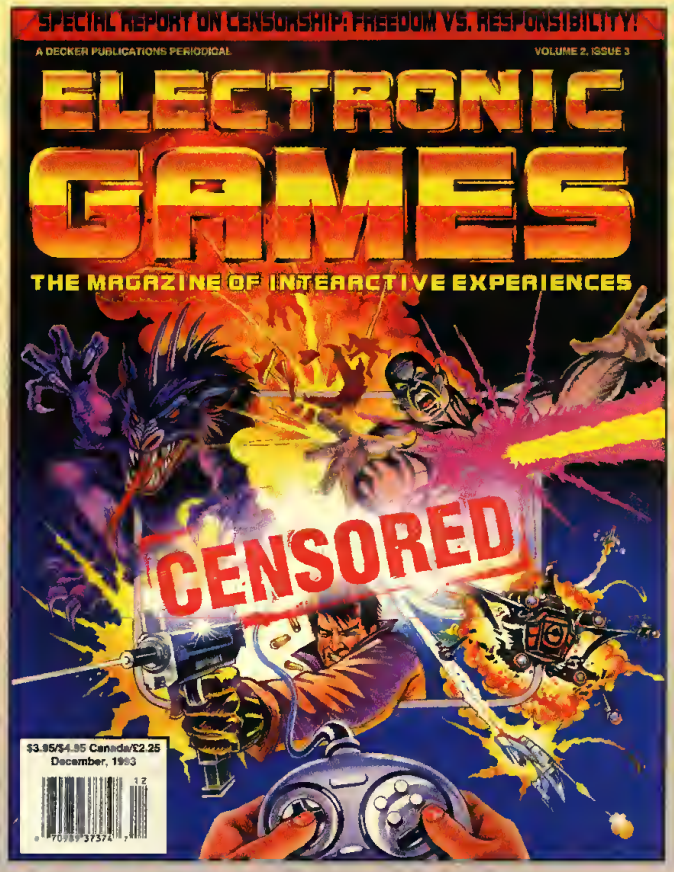

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CD GALLERY

Pyramid Patrol

PUBLISHER	Taito
DESIGNER	Naoyuki Kato
SYSTEM	Pioneer LaserActive/Sega

THEME	Action
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	8

LaserActive is now a reality, and may be judged on an even playing field with the competition. Within that context, the first true game to be offered for the system is **Pyramid Patrol**. **EG** is happy to report that it surpasses its advance billing. **Pyramid Patrol** is a visual tour de force that will amaze the most jaded video game player

The year is 2035 A satellite placed in orbit around the planet Mars has discovered an ancient ruin in the shape of a pyramid. A search party sent to examine the pyramid finds a golden idol and returns to their laboratory to study it. Unfortunately the removal of the idol brings an ancient civilization out of stasis. They set out to destroy the Earth for disturbing the idol. Man's only hope is to return the idol to place the aliens back into hibernation To do so, the player must lead a wing of four space fighters through the pyramid s defenses to its very core.

Experience incredible realism when guiding your ship through tunnels.

The visual impact of **Pyramid Patrol** is generated by overlaying digital graphics on computer generated 3-D analog backgrounds The latter are striking, with incredible detail, texture and motion. With a more advanced interface, these graphics could be the foundation of true virtual reality applications The foreground digital images vary in quality The majority of the enemy craft are noticeably 2-D against the background, but the bosses are something to behold.

The fight begins on the planet's surface with the wing of fighters skimming across rippled dunes of red martian dust to approach the ruin. The wingmen are only visible in the beginning of the game and in the cut sequences between stages. Otherwise, their presence is reinforced only by the incessant radio chatter that pervades the rest of the sequences. They do not contribute to combat—of which there is a sufficient amount to keep "shooter" fans busy for a long time to come

Wave after wave of different attack craft must be engaged Some appear ahead of the player, some come in from behind, but all action occurs in the foreground with a first-person perspective

The primary weapons of the enemy are balls of electricity that resemble photon torpedoes. These are fired in multiples that can quickly destroy the player's ship if left alone Fortunately they can be destroyed with the ship s energy weapon, which has an unlimited supply of ammunition.

A secondary enemy attack is the kamikaze approach. Though less damaging per hit than the photon torpedoes, these also deplete shields rapidly Shield strength is the limiting factor, so the objective is to avoid taking damage while sweeping the enemy from the screen.

After the first boss craft is destroyed, it plummets to the surface and explodes, blowing a hole in the side of the pyramid The wing sweeps inside this gap and down a winding tunnel to commence the second segment. There are seven stages inside the pyramid, but not all of them have bosses. Shields are replenished between each stage, but many players will still have difficulty fighting their way to the end battle. There are simply a lot of opponents and fast, furious action that often overwhelms the most capable players.

Pyramid Patrol may not offer the depth of play options or nterface mechanics demonstrated by many of the early 3DO titles, but it delivers more graphic punch than anything on the market. As such, it defines a new standard that others must scramble to emulate, as **EG** is unaware of any product in development that contends for sheer eye appeal For now, **EG**'s Action Multimedia Title of the Year!

— Ed Dille

COMPLEXITY	Hard
GRAPHICS	98%
SOUND	95%
PLAYABILITY	96%
REPLAYABILITY	88%

OVERALL 97%

Dracula Unleashed

PUBLISHER	Viacom
SYSTEM	PC CD-ROM

THEME	Horror
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

Gamers who have tracked Icom s FMV-based **Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective** series over the years should have a pretty good idea of what to expect from **Dracula Unleashed**, the first Icom game to be published by new owner Viacom. The basic engine and interface are pretty much the same, with lots of full-motion video clips and many of the same investigative tools that Holmes has employed over the years

The surprises, however, are twofold First, it is impressive to see how proficient Icom has become with this system The game flows smoothly, and the FMV sequences enhance rather than disrupt, the game s sense of reality The second surprise is the game s scare quotient, which is astonishingly high The video clips are so well-produced and so seamlessly inserted that the user has the sense of not just watching a movie but of actual involvement with the events transpiring on-screen

The story of **Dracula Unleashed** is set over a decade after the events chronicled in Stoker's classic shocker but well within the period of the Holmes chronicles, allowing Icom to take advantage of the costuming and decore Alexander Morris Quincey's brother (who was killed during the events related in the Stoker novel) sets the plot in motion when he arrives in London, hoping to clear up the mystery surrounding his brother's death.

Player-character Alexander starts the game in November of 1899, at his brother's gravesite. We are informed that he recently received a letter from an old friend—Father Janos—suggesting that Alexander look into Quincey's death, and that Alexander has also been introduced to the mysterious Hades Club, an obvious *roman a clef* for the notorious Hellfire Club.

Dracula Unleashed proceeds in the manner of the Holmes games with icon-driven commands interlaced with FMV sequences using a VCR-like interface to rewind fast-forward play or skip each of these interludes. The gamer interacts with other characters through the use of a series of command icons The Journal icon automatically updates the story line and contains relevant addresses, a pocket watch keeps track of the time· a satchel icon contains inventory items, a door icon accesses any unlocked portal a map for tracking location and an ear icon generates a description of important on-screen objects Users also have access to a help feature as well as a utility which replaces any icons/tools already used Finally there is a telegram icon, through which the player communicates with other characters a bed; and a silver disc, which allows games to be saved, restored, et al

Juliet rises evilly above her crypt, while the onlookers gaze upon her body.

The gamer travels about by clicking on a carriage then selecting a destination from the journal When the carriage arrives at that location the player clicks on the door icon to leave the carriage, then on the door of the new location to enter the building and interact with anyone inside

The atmospheric, full-motion video sequences are at the heart of the game, however, and their production here is just amazing. Icom has been doing this sort of thing longer than any other development house and it shows. **Dracula Unleashed** contains over 90 minutes of original FMV footage produced in the stately British style as epitomized by the Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing Hammer films of the '60s and '70s.

The live actors and animals used in the production create a very realistic effect.

Expect the game to play a bit slowly for the tastes of players who cut their fangs on video games and are used to instantaneous, real time activity **Dracula Unleashed** has a high strategy component, and once the novelty of watching the FMV clips wears off the game's pace may discourage users who prefer to move their characters around or those looking to start punching ashwood stakes through pulsing, undead hearts the instant the credits complete their crawl

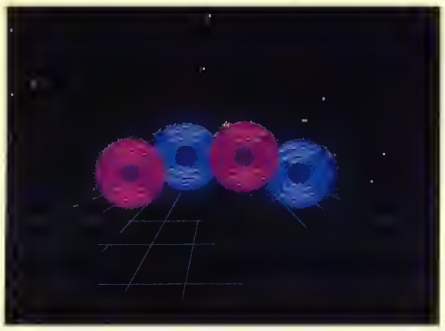
Another caveat: this is not a traditional role-playing game. The action is remote and often non-interactive as is the case during the FMV sequences. Players can review these segments as often as they wish so long as they stay in the same location Leaving and returning later is likely to produce a new flim clip.

Warnings issued this game is still a marvelously entertaining piece of multimedia software It is involving and frequently downright chilling, especially once the player gets past the opening scenes and into the actual business of vampire hunting. When it comes to this type of mixed media, nobody does it better than Icom

— Will Richardson

COMPLEXITY	Difficult
GRAPHICS	94%
SOUND	92%
PLAYABILITY	87%
REPLAYABILITY	86%

OVERALL 90%



CD GALLERY

Hell Cab

PUBLISHER	Time Warner Interactive
SYSTEM	MPC for Windows 3.1, Mac

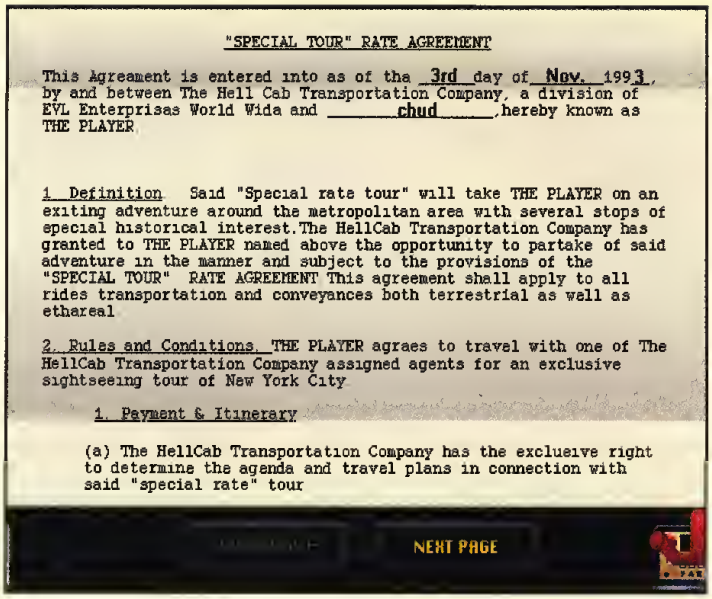
THEME	Adventure
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

Multimedia games are the next frontier of gaming for both fans and game companies alike The video, audio and graphics capabilities of CD-ROM technology promise exciting new games in the future. Many companies have jumped headfirst into the development of these more demanding products, while others have stepped back and cautiously produced multimedia games that only provide speech, enhanced music or another single feature of the medium rather than the whole palette of effects

Time Warner Interactive Group (TWIG) has a solid lineup of products that milk the most out of the CD-ROM format. Most of them are educational or reference titles, but **Hell Cab** is its first attempt at a game Although **Hell Cab** has an interesting premise and superior graphics and sounds, it lacks a clear direction in game play

Hell Cab's premise is original, but its execution can be trying. The game starts at JFK International Airport in New York City where an eager cab driver named Raul offers to take the player on a special cab tour of Manhattan. It turns out that Raul is a demon-in-disguise who wants to steal the player's soul A "Soul-O-Meter" in the cab replaces the standard taxi meter and always reads more than you can pay so one is forced to bargain with Raul in order to keep one s soul The result is a game full of split-second decisions and many cab rides through New York City, ancient Rome, a prehistoric era and Europe during WWI

Raul welcomes you to NYC, and sets you up for a ride of an (after) lifetime.



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This Agreement is entered into as of the 3rd day of Nov. 1993, by and between The Hell Cab Transportation Company, a division of EVL Enterprises World Wide and chud, hereby known as THE PLAYER

1. Definition Said "Special rate tour" will take THE PLAYER on an exiting adventure around the metropolitan area with several stops of special historical interest. The HellCab Transportation Company has granted to THE PLAYER named above the opportunity to partake of said adventure in the manner and subject to the provisions of the "SPECIAL TOUR" RATE AGREEMENT This agreement shall apply to all rides transportation and conveyances both terrestrial as well as ethereal

2. Rules and Conditions. THE PLAYER agrees to travel with one of The HellCab Transportation Company assigned agents for an exclusive sightseeing tour of New York City

1. Payment & Itinerary

(a) The HellCab Transportation Company has the exclusive right to determine the agenda and travel plans in connection with said "special rate" tour

NEXT PAGE

Hell Cab's interface is straightforward and intuitive. The player can move through the game by using the arrows that pop up on the screen. Click on objects to use them or drag them to the "I Love NY" shopping bag to store them as inventory.

That's about all anyone needs to know to start **Hell Cab**. At some points in the game players can use weapons. In most cases, they can control these weapons with the mouse. Also, ATM machines are a source of both money to pay off Raul and hints for the game Because **Hell Cab** is a point-and-click game, many people will jump right in but they need to understand the basic premise before serious play.

The Soul-O-Meter represents how much soul the player has left for a particular life There are three lives in a game Throughout their journeys, players will encounter situations in which they have to make a moral choice of some sort quickly For example, in Rome they can kill a centurion or let him live. Incorrect choices take points from the Soul-O-Meter and eventually lose a life. The object is to make it through the game without losing all three lives.

After a few games the correct choices will be obvious. That only leaves exploration in lieu of game play. So it doesn't matter how good the effects are—the game is sometimes dull.

Hell Cab's graphics and sound effects are top-notch examples of what multimedia can add to a game. A multitude of actors interact with the player via video clips overlaid on the backgrounds.

Hell Cab also features a host of detailed and colorfu graphics and animation segments that show off the abilities of game designer and renowned comic book artist Pepe Moreno His most popular creation was the computer-generated graphics novel **Batman: Digital Justice** that provided a completely original perspective on the Dark Knight Detective. Moreno's work on **Hell Cab** displays an equally unique vision that fits the humor and theme of the game Even the game box's design is creative. Add to the excellent graphics the speech, sound effects and interesting original music and you have a game that still entertains with its graphics and audio despite the mediocre game play

Hell Cab is a nice first game from TWIG and an even more impressive product from Moreno despite its weaknesses. Many players new to multimedia may find **Hell Cab** to be the right speed, but others will question the amount of game play Raul treats players to a hellacious adventure through time and New York that showcases Moreno s bizarre creations and provides examples of the many instances in which CD-ROM games outshine floppy disk products.

After Rome and the prehistoric dinosaurs, New York never looked so welcoming!

— *Russ Ceccola*

COMPLEXITY	Simple
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	90%
PLAYABILITY	80%
REPLAYABILITY	80%

OVERALL 80%

Lunar: The Silver Star

PUBLISHER	Working Designs
SYSTEM	Sega CD

THEME	RPG
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	N/A

First off there is no damsel in distress here to rescue Any video game that doesn't have some poor heroine who needs saving gains automatic points in my book. To put it simply, **Lunar** is a game of adventure. The story opens with Alex, a young man who craves a life of adventure like his hero, the great Dragonmaster Dyne. Every day Alex visits the memorial to Dyne and dreams of the day when he will be able to journey on to great adventures. Fortunately for those playing the game that time coincides perfectly with the beginning of this game

There is not a huge amount of background given at the start of the game. Unlike many console RPGs which start off with a crisis, **Lunar** is built from the spirit of adventure Alex and his friends Luna, not really a damsel in distress, although she does take on the role of the character with a mysterious past who is adopted by Alex's family· Ramus, Alex's rotund friend and son of the village elder Ramus craves fame and fortune; and Nall, described as a "strange winged catlike creature" who provides Alex with constant companionship.

There will be four other companions to meet along the way but these are the four the game is started with, and the characters you wi get to know best.

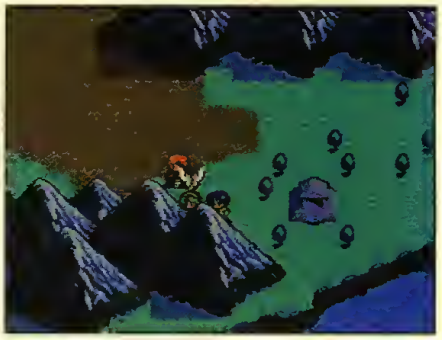
Occasionally, characters will come to life and speak during the cut-scenes.

Lunar is a very big game. Like most RPGs of this type there are plenty of monsters to fight, a necessity for gaining experience and raising your character's levels. The earliest parts of the quest are focused around gaining strength and experience The game will purposely take characters to the same location several times, forcing the player to fight many battles When defeated characters don't die, they just get removed from the fight.

If the game had to be broken down into its main components it would be simplest to say that this is a game of exploring towns and mazes dungeons caves, heavily wooded areas etc.) gaining information by talking to people, hunting treasure and hacking apart numerous types of monsters. And there is nothing terribly original about how any of this is done.

That is not to say that this is a bad game. The story is fun and the interface is excellent. All of the functions are available at the push of a button. Characters share all money and items from a main screen and everything except equipped items can be accessed by any character.

During battle, the game gives an equal amount of excellent options. The player can choose the order of the characters, and whether they will attack, use magic, use an item retreat back or run. Along with the standard items raised with experience there are a few slightly different ones, such as anti-magic (the ability to resist magic spells), number of attacks (how many times a character can hit per round), and number of moves (how far a character can move per round). The Battle Mode also includes a nice AI option where the computer picks the best move



Along your journey you will find temples where you can rest and be healed.

The graphics in **Lunar** are nice especially during the cut-scenes. Some may expect better game graphics from a CD game, but graphics take a back seat to game play in this type of game, and these are solid and certainly passable

The sounds are excellent and the actors used for the voice segments do an admirable job. The one major complaint here is that the game suffers from early-CD-game-itis. Small segments of voice have been recorded, but may only include a portion of a conversation Thus, just as the game is giving players the feel for a character, the cut-scene ends and the regular graphics and printed text continues. It can become annoying at times.

The game play is excellent also, and there is not a lot of tedious waiting while the game loads the various segments. The quantity and diversity of the characters is great, and the addition of the character Nall who provides information such as what monsters are attacking and the groups chances with them) and services save load, party order) is completely original and a great touch.

Games like this have been sorely lacking on the Sega CD and **Lunar** is a great place to start. This is a highly recommended game for any RPG fan

— Marc Camron

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	86%
PLAYABILITY	86%
REPLAYABILITY	62%

OVERALL 86%

PORTABLE PLAYTIME

Batman: The Animated Series

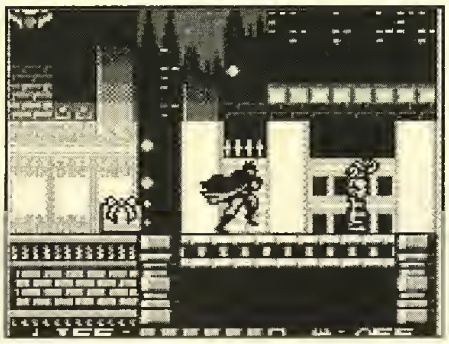
PUBLISHER	Konami
SYSTEM	Game Boy

THEME	Action
MEGABITS	1
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	5

It's easier to capture the look of a thing than to capture the feel of it. **Batman: The Animated Series** from Konami certainly captures the cartoon noir look of the syndicated TV show but the atmosphere proves harder to catch

Batman and Robin pursue the usual suspects—The Joker, Mr Freeze, Scarecrow, the Penguin Poison Ivy the Riddler and Catwoman—through Gotham city, with the side-scrolling action spread over five episodes Batman handles some of these alone and in others the episode is split, with some areas featuring only Robin, and others starring Batman

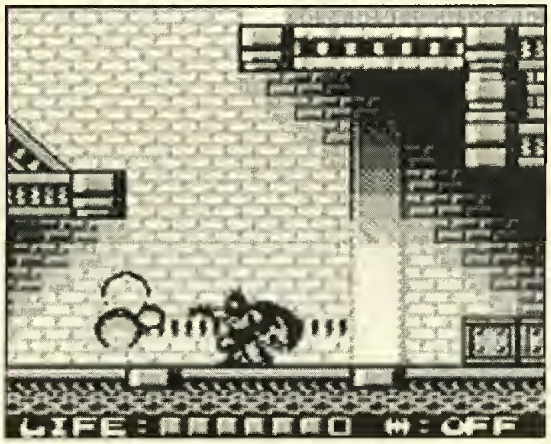
Batman is equipped with a Bat-grappling hook that's handy for climbing things and avoiding killer clowns, gunslinger goons and other assorted nasties. Bat shaped power-ups provide Batman with a small supply of Batarangs These allow Batman to take out the bad guys from a distance but are no more powerful than his punches so it often takes two of the precious things to do a bad guy in.



The Caped Crusader has to rely on his instincts and speed to battle his foes.

Robin has no grappling hook, but he can jump up and cling to ceilings and such. He gets around this way by going hand-over-hand This is quite effective for avoiding the gun-toting types, which is a good idea as Robin can withstand less injury than the Caped Crusader Offensively, Robin punches like Batman and with a power-up he gains the use of a sling shot that is as powerful as Batman's Batarangs, which is to say, not very tough

In the configuration screen, available



before the game begins, players may reconfigure the controls, choose between two difficulty levels and choose the number of available continues. Two is the maximum number of continues to be had and this is not really enough. Many players will die in the middle of a game and have to start again from the beginning.

A life meter at the bottom of the screen tells how much more damage our heroes can take. When this life meter is empty Batman or Robin die and a continue may be used. Heart shaped power-ups provide energy that restores lost life.

The graphics are good for the Game Boy and there is little of the usual blur around fast moving objects. The sprites are rather small, but all are rendered well The characters are easily identifiable and they never fade into even the most richly detailed backgrounds. These heavily detailed, well done backgrounds are the closest **Batman: The Animated Series** comes to recreating the animated television series

The soundtrack does use the music from the TV show but during the majority of the game play one piece of theme music is used over and over again That wouldn't be so bad if the piece in question were something quick and driving, suitable for an action game. nstead, we hear a sort of low key, mid-tempo piece that sounds like music to creep through a haunted house by. The boss scenes, where Batman or Robin confront the villain(s) of the episode, have faster, tension building music, but these aren't the only scenes with action and excitement. The music makes a difference Sound effects are sparse but those that are there sound good

The one vital element which this game lacks is probably the hardest to convey from television to video game: drama. With only two colors, limited sound and one perspective there is no way the Game Boy can recreate the dramatic writing, muted colors and gripping action of the cartoon. The player never becomes involved with the on-screen character It doesn't feel like we are running through the streets of Gotham with Batman

Fighting super villains should be more exciting than this.

— John Hardin

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	76%
REPLAYABILITY	79%

OVERALL 77%

Sonic Chaos

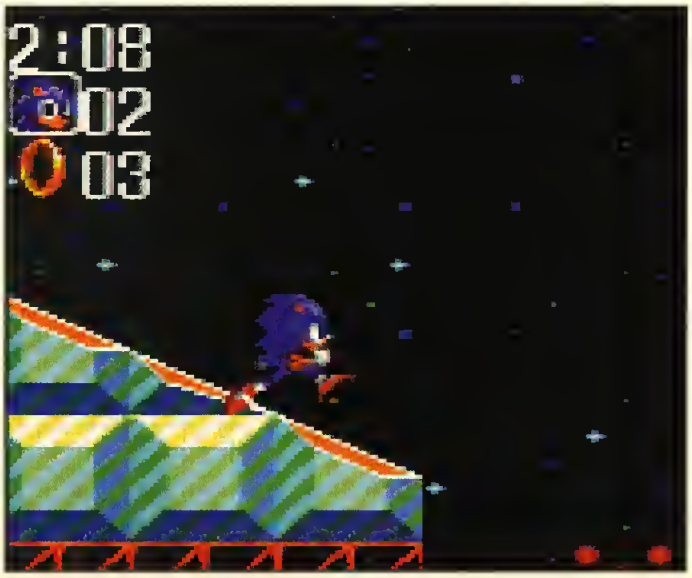
PUBLISHER	Sega
SYSTEM	Game Gear

THEME	Action
MEGABITS	4
PLAYERS	1
LEVELS	18

Everyone's favorite dynamic duo comes back to the Game Gear No, not Batman and Robin· Sonic and Tails! Sonic the Hedgehog and Tails return to the portable screen where they must thwart Dr Robotnik s latest bid to take over the world The deviant doctor wants to steal the Chaos Emeralds, which are the source of vitality for all things. Sonic and Tails need to find the rest of the Chaos Emeralds and restore harmony to the universe All in a day's work for the high speed hedgehog.

Those familiar power-ups are ready and waiting to help Sonic thwart the Doc.

Sonic Chaos has two difficulty levels. For maximum difficulty, players can choose Sonic and start with three lives and no continues. Players choosing Tails begin with five lives and five continues.



Besides the numerous continues scattered throughout the levels, players are awarded an extra life every 25,000 points. Additionally, every time Tails collects 100 rings the player is awarded an extra life. There is no shortage of continues and players won't be pulling their hair out every time they die in the middle of a level.

There is one drawback for gamers playing Tails, it's harder to win. Only Sonic can make it to the special stages where the Chaos Emeralds are found It's easier to win with all of the Chaos Emeralds.

All of the high speed high jinks that Sonic is famous for can be found here, in spades. There are six levels of loops, corkscrews, platforms, spikes, rings and smashable walls.

The zones seem huge, with no one right way to go through a level The designers were generous and gave players 10 minutes to complete each of the three acts in a zone, so there is plenty of time to explore and find all of the little surprises and hidden stuff that these wide open levels can accommodate. Zone One Turquoise Hill Zone, has Sonic or Tails facing spike traps, Boing o Bots and a giant lady bug boss. Zone Two, Gigapolis Zone has Metal o Turtles, bugs and a Bead Worm boss. Zone Three, the Sleeping Egg Zone, has treacherous illusions, Veg o Bots and a Bouncy Boss Robot.

The Mecha Green Hill Zone is the fourth zone. It has Coconut Bots, molten metal and a Tree Crawler Boss. Zone 5, the Aqua Planet Zone, is an underwater level where Sonic or Tails must fight fierce currents, tunnels and a Spring o Bot boss The 6th and most deadly zone is the Electric Egg Zone. Watch out for laser guns here, breakaway floors and the Laser Walker This is your chance to do Dr Robotnik in and save the universe All of this, of course, takes place at blistering speeds.

The graphics are of the high quality one would expect from Sega s flagship title. Everything is sharply detailed and outlined. Every surface is textured and vividly colored, and the effect is very much like playing an interactive cartoon. Even things in the distant background are animated It's attention to detail like this that sets this game apart from many other efforts in the portable field.

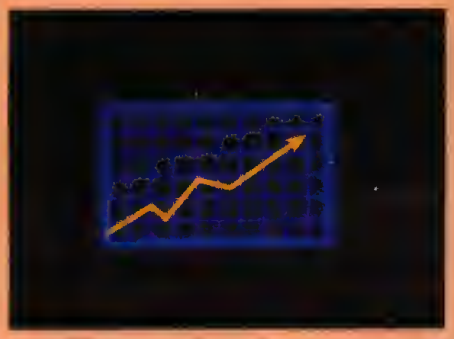
Sonic Chaos sounds as good as it looks and there is never a quiet moment. This game has better sound than many of the games that were produced for 8-Bit platforms. The music is frenetic and varied and the only way it could have been improved was perhaps to add a little guitar to it. I mean, with a game this fast, a little speed metal would seem to be in order don't you think?

The controls are flawless, with Sonic or Tails responding quickly and smoothly to every command

With **Sonic Chaos,** Sega has another very strong title on the Game Gear and another fun installment in the Sonic and Tails saga. Games like this show why Sega is winning the video game wars with other companies.

— John Hardin

COMPLEXITY	Average
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	85%
REPLAYABILITY	85%
OVERALL	**89%**



KUNKEL REPORT

AMOA Notebook

by Bill Kunkel

I hadn't been to an AMOA Show (the big coin-op expo) in many years, and my most striking impression of this year's shindig is its size. Despite drawing in the neighborhood of 7,000 people, the show seemed...small. Certainly, compared to the gargantuan extravaganzas staged in Chicago during the **Pac-Man** era of the early '80s, this year's Anaheim bustout seems like comparatively small potatoes.

• The other thing that was small at this show were the ideas. With the exception of platform games, which were in thankfully short supply, there wasn't a major new idea in view. The closest thing to an original concept was Sunsoft's **Punky Doodle**, a combination of **Qix** and a maze-chase with cutesy graphics. And speaking of classic game ideas, both Jaleco's **Peek-a-Boo!** and Kaneko's **Gal's Panic II** put a new spin on **Qix** and **Breakout**: as the player clears sections of the playfield, they reveal images of scantily clad models.

• The staples, of course, were fighting and driving contests. Obviously, **Mortal Kombat II** (Williams) drew a lot of interest [see article elsewhere this issue], but the knockout in this genré was Sega's sizzling new **Virtua Fighters**. Games that feature human characters rendered in polygons haven't seen much success, but the astonishing graphics in Sega's street fighter are a good bet to change all that. Characters fight on a square, grid-like surface, with movement in all standing directions. The visuals are eye-popping, and you'll want to start pumping tokens into this baby ASAP.

Other fighting contests included **Violent Storm** from Konami; **Survival Arts**, an **MK**-style contest with huge sprites from American Sammy; and the best of the **MK**-wannabes, Kaneko's **Blood Warrior** (**O-Edo Fight** in Japan). It was interesting to note that this year's breed of fighting games mostly aped **Kombat** rather than **Street Fighter II**. And speaking of **SF II**, Capcom debuted **Super Street Fighter II** to surprisingly minimal interest. Most of the arcade hotshots I spoke to felt the game didn't bring enough original content to the party, despite four new characters with "all-new moves." There were also some complaints that the game was a little slow—perhaps anticipating the arrival of **Super Street Fighter II–Turbo Edition**?

• Car games went into overdrive at this show, with Namco's retina-thrashing **Ridge Racer** leading the pack. The graphics absolutely blow away anything you've ever seen.

World Rally offers intense driving tests across different terrains and tracks.

Other automotively inclined entries included Sega's **OutRunners**, the latest take on the long-running **Outrun** series; **Grand Prix Star II** (Jaleco); **World Rally** (Atari); and **Driver's Edge** from Strata. The Strata game, which was developed by Incredible Technologies, would have drawn a lot more interest if Namco's game hadn't overshadowed everything in this genré.

• The company that took the biggest step forward at this year's AMOA was Namco. In addition to **Ridge Racer**, they showed off **Cyber Sled**, a polygon graphics future-sport sim in which players go head-to-head in a series of arena configurations, firing guns and guided missiles at one another's sleds. And finally, there's Namco's **Galaxian 3 Theater 6** technology, a multi-player **Battle Tech**-style entertainment. Six players are seated at an extended console, and each is assigned their own battle station and gun control. Look for the company that brought us **Pac-Man**, **Galaxian** and other arcade classics to step back into the lead in the coin-op world.

With the exception of platform games, which were in short supply, there wasn't a major new idea in view.

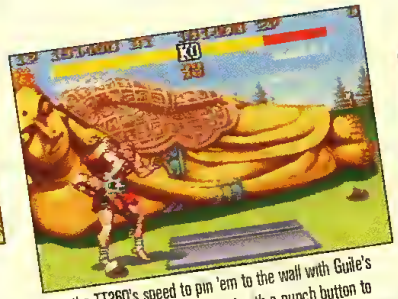
• The rest of the show was the usual mix of sports games, light gun contests and attempts to exploit public fascination with virtual reality. The sports games included Konami's **Run and Gun**, a b-ball contest; Namco's multi-event cyber-olympian **Numan Athletics**; Irem's golf sim **Skins Game**; and Strata's **Hard Yardage**, a gridiron game with lots of play calling, interesting graphics and a mediocre interface. New light gun games (a hot category) were offered by Jaleco (**Wild Pilot**, a dogfighting/machine gun game), Namco (**Lucky & Wild**, a combination driving/shooting contest), Sega (**Alien 3: The Gun** is basically **T2** times two, with a pair of weapons to use on charging Aliens) and, of course, ALG (**Shoot Out at Old Tucson**, **Drug Wars**, and a two-player version of **Mad Dog II**). We also saw three new VR game formats—from VOR, AWT, and VR8—which we'll cover in depth in an upcoming issue.

• And what game show would be complete without the obligatory oddity? This time we saw the unforgettable **Ninja Baseball Bat Man**, from Irem, in which a crazed player-character traverses a scrolling playfield, whacking the hell out of everyone he encounters with a wooden baseball bat!

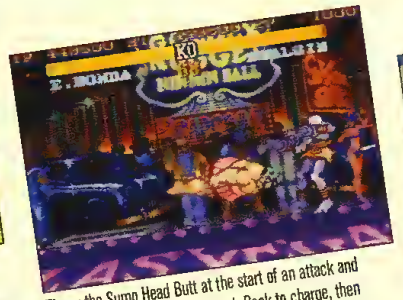
Oh, and remind me to tell you about those nutty redemption games one of these days! There's this one from Sega starring Sonic the Hedgehog where...

Spin out Ryu's Hurricane Kick with turbo ease! Unlike old-fashioned control pads, the TT360 delivers the action without hesitation. Press Down, Down-Back, Back and any kick to unleash this powerful attack.

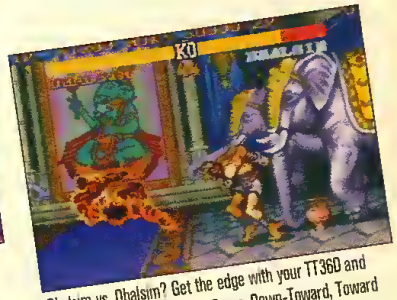
Want to burn 'em up with Ryu? Slide your thumb Down, Down-Toward, Toward and press a punch button. With the TT360 you own 360° circular control! Pitch a series of these fireballs to do mega-damage.



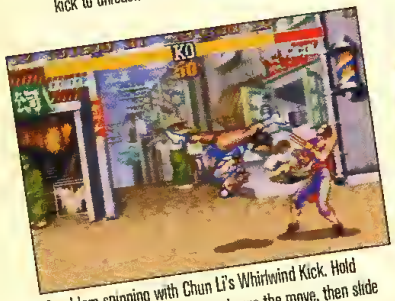
Use the TT360's speed to pin 'em to the wall with Guile's Knee! Charge back, then forward with a punch button to throw a Sonic Boom. Follow with Touch Sensor Toward with the Forward Kick on Turbo.



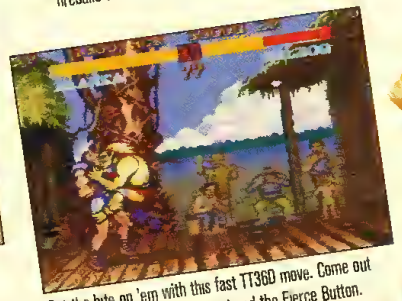
Throw the Sumo Head Butt at the start of an attack and you're invincible. Slide your thumb Back to charge, then forward and any punch button. Follow it up with a Hundred Hand slap by putting any punch button on Turbo.



Dhalsim vs. Dhalsim? Get the edge with your TT360 and Yoga Fire. Slide your thumb Down, Down-Toward, Toward and any punch button. You'll throw hre faster with the TT360's superior diagonal control.



Send 'em spinning with Chun Li's Whirlwind Kick. Hold Down on the Touch Sensor to charge the move, then slide your thumb Up and press a kick button. This tricky move will whittle your enemies strength down to nothing!



Put the bite on 'em with this fast TT360 move. Come out of any attack and press Toward and the Fierce Button. The result? A face-full of fangs that will eat away their strength meter.

M. Bison's Flaming Torpedo burns the screen and it's easy to unleash with the TT360. Charge Back, then slide your thumb Toward while pressing a punch button. Crispy critter time!

Sagat's Tiger Knee is made for the TT360. Slide your thumb from Down, Down-Toward, Toward, Up-Toward and a kick button to deliver this devastating knee attack ..with no numb thumb!

BATTLE TESTED IN THE STREETS

When you play Street Fighter II Turbo,® you need a controller that's fast, that gives you all the action you want – easily and effortlessly, and that destroys your opponent, not your thumb! That's why you should be using the Turbo Touch 360,™ The Ultimate Fighting Machine, for all your favorite games. The Turbo Touch 360 "touch sensor" allows your thumb or index finger to move effortlessly across the sensor plate – you don't have to push down. Objects on the screen move as fast as you move your finger, you've got real diagonal and true circular control, and you really feel like you're in the game. The pay-off is being the ultimate fighting machine and trashing your opponent... you know, the guy using the old-fashioned control pad. So, go into the streets to win – go battle-tested with the Turbo Touch 360.

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FANDOM CENTRAL

Read the Latest

by Arnie Katz

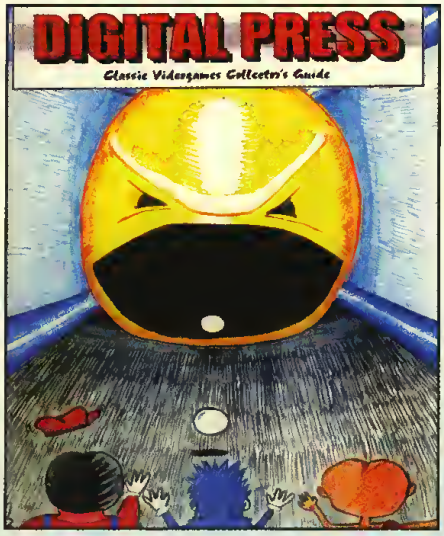
The mail for "Fandom Central" mostly runs very positive. One complaint I do get: "Why didn't you review *my* fanzine?"

The answer involves two factors. There is never enough room to mention all the zines and I try to highlight those I think readers will enjoy the most. try to spread the reviews around among as many titles as possible but feel the better ones deserve the extra space they get.

To start the year off a little happier for more faneds, I' I get right to the zines.

Classic Video games Collector's Guide
Edited by Joe Santulli
44 Hunter Pl
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
Special No price listed 64 pages

Joe made only one important mistake when preparing this authoritative spiral-bound second edition he didn't include the price! Try sending him $5 and beg for



a copy of this absolutely indispensible publication. If you have a serious interest in old games, you can't afford to miss this outstanding compendium of essential information.

Game Force #4
Edited by Jeff Beedham
314 Huston St.
Lock Haven, PA 17745
Frequent, 50¢ per issue 8 pages

Expanded coverage that includes Al Giovetti s short computer reviews highlights this issue Jeff has opted for a tighter format and in the process, produced by far his best zine.

I especially liked Jeff's review of Joe Santull s video gaming soundtrack and his news about the group fanzine, **Superzine**, which some of the BNFs are assembling for release in a few months.

The Laser #4
Edited by Mike Palisano
2 Rock Ridge Dr., Norwalk, CT 06854
Bimonthly $1.75 per issue 18 pages

Space-age headings give **The Laser** more graphic unity than most fanzines, but the content is the intelligent and opinionated fare found in all the good ones. Reviews news, Mike s commentary on professional magazines, and an editorial on game prices are all worth the reading time.

Mike becomes a better writer and editor with every fanzine He s no longer just a bright-eyed neo-fan. **The Laser** is a good choice for serious gamers.

MEGAmania #1
Edited by Jim Pittaro
18 Old Coach Rd., Hudson, NH 03051
Bimonthly, 75¢ per issue, 14 pages

Last month, I reviewed Michael Pittaro's **Uproar**. This time, it's the other half of the brother act. Jim has folded **Total Supremacy** and started a new title in keeping with his developing taste. **MEGAmania #1**, despite some reproduction problems, eclipses the earlier zine in every respect. Jim learned the basics of fanzine publishing with his first publication, and this one is off to a great start.

Random Access #2
Edited by Scott Boehmer
Carman Hall, Rm 354
Charleston, IL 61920-4260
Irregular, $1.00 per issue, 20 pages

Extensive fanzine reviews, a controversial letter column, and an engaging editorial presence are big attractions of this newish, but fast-improving fanzine.

Scott and his sidekick, Dangerous Billy Masters, are learning to write. As they acquire confidence, the wilder side of their personalities emerge in sharper focus. Although less reliance on news reporting would make **Random Access** a stronger fanzine, the overal content gets a good grade.

The question of how far zines should stray from game-oriented writing is creating a lot of interest in this fanzine. Scott tries to blend in some non-game stuff but he emphasizes the hobby that got him to publish in the first place

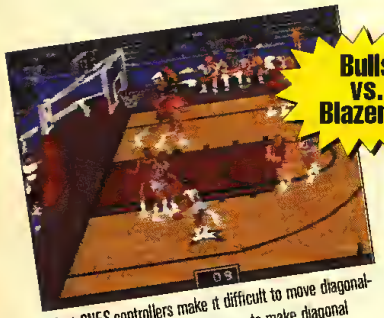
Spectrum #4
Edited by Ara Sirinian
10904 Haislip Ct.
Potomac, MD 20854
Quarterly $1.00 per issue 20 pages

Iconoclastic Ara keeps the pages of this newsletter-format fanzine popping with plenty of insights, comments, and opinions. His willingness to speak plainly fires up the letter column and guarantees his readers a mental work-out.

Humor plays an important role in **Spectrum** Just when Ara and his band of merry critics start to sound strident, you find something like Mark Evereklian's light-hearted column about the endless series of **Street Fighter** games. Mark goes on to make some strong points, but the humor is a needed break.

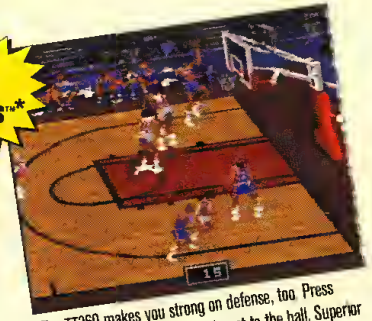
Spectrum also offers lots of hardcore reviews of computer and video games. The staff is developing a chemistry that bodes well for the future. Get on Ara's subscriber rolls now, and don't miss another exciting issue.

Attention fanzine editors: If you'd like your fanzine reviewed in a future issue, send it to: Arnie Katz, 339 S. Decatur, Las Vegas, NV 89107.



Bulls vs. Blazers™*

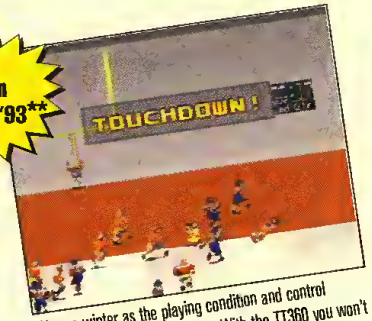
Most SNES controllers make it difficult to move diagonally. The TT360 gives you the power to make diagonal drives on the net with no numb thumb!



The TT360 makes you strong on defense, too. Press Button B to select your man closest to the ball. Superior diagonal control puts you where you need to be, ready to hit Button Y and block the shot.

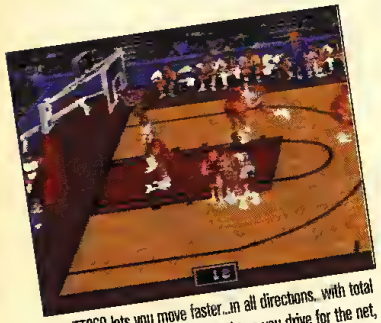
John Madden Football™ '93**

Pass plays call for split second reactions and timing. The TT360 gives you fine-tuned control over all your players, where old-fashioned controllers might only slow you down!



Choose winter as the playing condition and control becomes even more important. With the TT360 you won't slipslide away...or mangle your thumb trying to turn on a dime and make the end zone.

This type of situation was made for the TT360. You need to move fast and tight to score. A direct attack, and old-fashioned controllers...won't make the grade. Head Diagonal behind the net and try to dump it in the corner of the crease.



The TT360 lets you move faster...in all directions, with total circular control. Fake left and right as you drive for the net, then Button A for the Jump Shot.

*Shown on SNES **Shown on Genesis

Now you can have tight control over your backs in an end run. The TT360 makes it easy. Left, Diagonal and Up in a simple thumb sweep. The advantage is yours. Drive for the goal posts.

NHL Hockey '94™**

You're on breakaway...one-on-one. Now's not the time for your controller to let you down. The TT360's smooth Touch Pad lets you switch direction fast to fake-out the toughest defense men. Cut to the Left Diagonal and go for the goal.

To be the best, you need a controller that gives you easy access to the diagonals as well as the cardinal directions. Use your right wing to pull your opponents off to the side. Diagonal pass, shoot, and score for victory. The TT360 can make you a winner.

PLAY WITH AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

When you play EA Sports® games, you need a controller that's fast, that gives you all the action you want – easily and effortlessly, and that destroys your opponent, not your thumb! That's why you should be using the Turbo Touch 360,™ The Ultimate Scoring Machine, for all your favorite games. The Turbo Touch 360 "touch sensor" allows your thumb or index finger to move effortlessly across the sensor plate – you don't have to push down. Objects on the screen move as fast as you move your finger, you've got real diagonal and true circular control, and you really feel like you're in the game. The pay-off is being the ultimate scoring machine and trashing your opponent... you know the guy using the old-fashioned control pad. So, play with an unfair advantage. Play with the Turbo Touch 360.

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The Ultimate Scoring Machine.

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For Genesis, SNES, & Nintendo

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THE JURY

We didn't really skip this column last month for lack of contributions, but rather because we realized the deadline was getting too close to the date EG was reaching the stands in many areas. It told us a great deal that some of you were sending entries by Priority Mail or even Express Mail or UPS—both about your commitment and interest, and the need to extend the time available.

Here are the winners for Contest #13:

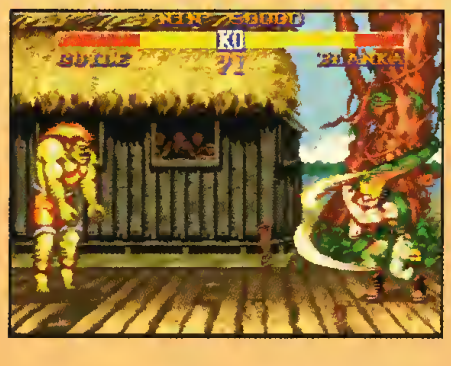
Street Fighter II Turbo

Capcom
SNES
1 Player

Winning Review
by Michael Powell

His eyes glass over and his legs go rubbery; you jump forward with your strongest kick and finish him with a Tiger Uppercut which sends Ryu in an uncontrolled screen length flight. And the best part is you didn't even have to leave the safety of your own living room chair.

The **Street Fighter II Turbo** upgrade is everything fight fans have been waiting for. Sharper graphics, more animation, new combos, faster game play, true stereo sound and the option to play any of the boss characters, giving a grand total of 12 characters to choose from, with more individual style and ability than you find in most role-playing games.



The Turbo version of Street Fighter II adds super-speed to the contestants.

In addition, a lot of work went into evening out game play with improved special moves all around. Now even Chun Li has a shot in head-to-head combat with top fighters like the ultimate world warrior M. Bison.

Street Fighter II Turbo for the Super NES is bar none the best fight you can have without a trip to the arcade or Madison Square Garden and a must buy for punch-fest fans.

The world warriors are at it again, only this time they're turbocharged fighters!

Runner-Up Review
by Nick Fox-Gieg

Street Fighter II: Turbo Champion Edition is a virtual masterpiece in silicon; it's the finest translation of an arcade game in the short history of electronic gaming. Having had two previous tries on two separate systems to perfect the game, Capcom's programmers have created the ultimate Street Fighter competition. Boasting lavish new animation, faster action and the SNES's superior digital sound and color palette, as well as impressive new special moves and Champion Edition features, this third version easily surpasses the Genesis and earlier SNES cartridges.

However, are the improvements really enough justification for a whole new game? After all, this is the second "new and improved" reworking of the same sequel, with a third around the corner. If you already have the original game and aren't a die-hard fan, then the special features may not provide the incentive to spend another 70 dollars on this latest incarnation. Newcomers to the series, on the other hand, will definitely want to spring for the Turbo Edition, especially considering that it's nearly equal to the first **Street Fighter II** in price. Capcom has created a polished, expertly reworked game that may survive the test of time and become a classic in its genre ... but was it really necessary?

Join the Jury

Review a game in EG's monthly contest!

Each month, **Electronic Games'** critics review dozens of new releases. They do a great job, but a lot of our readers are knowledgeable and perceptive about the games, too. Now our unique monthly contest lets you strut your stuff. We'll pick a video cart each month, and challenge gamers to review it. Then, in *The Jury*, **EG** will print the best ones—and give a free game cart to the winner.

The rules are simple:

1. All reviews must be of the nominated game.
2. Entrants can submit only **one** review of each game.
3. All submissions become the property of **EG**.
4. Reviews should be 200 words or less, typed double-spaced.
5. The month's best review, as determined by **EG** editors, earns the writer the currently available video or computer game of his or her choice (sorry, no Neo•Geo carts).
6. The contest is open to anyone who has not sold professionally to **EG** within the previous 12 months (exclusive of this contest).

Game for Contest #15:
Mortal Kombat/Acclaim/Arena
SNES/Genesis/portables

Deadline for this month's contest:
February 1, 1994

Send entries to:
The Jury (Electronic Games)
330 S. Decatur, Suite 152
Las Vegas, NV 89107

...and don't forget to tell us what video game you'd like if you are the winner!

PLAYING IT SMART

Singing In The New Year

by Joyce Worley

PC users can make merry melodies with the help of some learning ware as fun to use as it is musical to hear.

Dr. T's Sing-A-Long (Dr. T's Music Software/MS-DOS) contains 26 tunes with animated illustrations for each. It's set up as a kid's karaoke, and designed for ages four to 10, but it's such a charmer that parents will want to chime in.

The screen is dominated by the picture window, with simple control buttons to the left of the illustration. The melody scrolls along the staff in the bottom third of the screen (a feature that helps kids learn to sight-read songs), and, beneath

Dr. T's Sing-A-Along lets adults and kids alike sing their favorite childhood tunes.

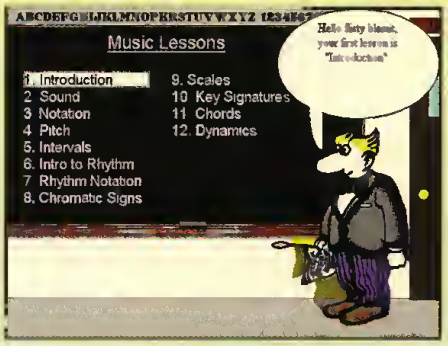
that, lyrics scroll in time with the music.

This is a bright note in children's programs. The animations are charming, the controls are infant-simple, and it just cries out for the user to sing along. There are pop-up actors, a control that speaks the song name, an audible volume slide, a mixer to customize the settings, and even a little kid's setting that readies it for unsupervised play.

For a more serious approach to musical instruction, **The Musical World of Professor Piccolo** (Opcode Interactive/CD-ROM) provides a learning adventure for ages eight to adult. The main display shows Music Town's seven locations. The Symphony Hall contains an orchestra and the user can hear each member play. There's also some real meat: an analysis of the symphonic form, using Haydn's Symphony No. 88 as example. The Library demonstrates every musical instrument. In the Church, the user learns the history of religious music. The Jazz Club and the Rock Club contain information and history of each form of music, along with performances. For serious learning, the Music School has an interactive music course. **Professor Piccolo** is not just entertaining, it's also a great teaching program.

Rock and Bach Studio (Binary Zoo/MS-DOS) is a musical activity designed for ages seven to 14; this program will also have great appeal for adults. Would-be musicians can assemble a band, compose a song, then make a rock video. But, there's more here than a clever light show and animated characters to man the band. The Drum Clinic has various kits and patterns; the Harmony section shows how notes and harmony interact. The Instrument Room lets the user sample all the instruments, and the Music Library contains information and pieces by famous composers. There's a sound library, some preset songs, lots of special sound effects and tempo training. Music lovers can listen to or modify the music on disk, write tunes from scratch, or combine riffs to create cool new sounds. This is a honey of a program that will provide hours of melodic musicianship along with a vast storage of valuable musical knowledge.

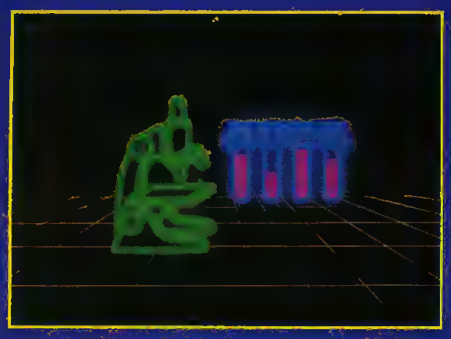
E Book's **Mozart** (CD-ROM)



Professor Piccolo is ready and waiting to teach users about the music world.

is a high-tech treat for the soul. It combines graphics, historical essays, biographies and musical trivia with the magnificent sounds of the master. This could be defined as a learning experience; certainly, there is a lot of knowledge to be gained from the program. But, it's also a fantastic musical experience for any age, that brings Mozart, his times and his music to life.

The four programs discussed here are as different as snowflakes, but will last a lot longer. Each has a wealth of pleasure and knowledge embedded in it, to bring the sound of music to your life. Use your PC to bring enjoyment to your speakers.



TEST LAB

Having Foresight, But Lacking Hindsight

Pioneer LaserActive
Pioneer Electronics
Base Unit: CLD-A100 player $970 00
Sega Control Pack: $600.00
NEC Control Pack $600.00
Karaoke Control Pack. $350 00
Software average per title $120 00

When Pioneer previewed its LaserActive system at the Consumer Electronics Show last January they did so in an environment pervaded with babble about 3DO. Subsequently despite the fact that their demonstration that evening evoked a number of oohs and aahs from the jaded media hardly a ripple remained in the journalistic pool after February

At the June CES, Pioneer elected not to display on the main floor conducting by invitation meetings at another location entirely. This move generated further skepticism within industry professionals who, over the course of time have learned not to place too much stock in early product demonstrations. With the stage thus set, it is not surprising that the roll out of the first units n October also lacked an accompanying fanfare in the press

Does this mean LaserActive is unworthy of coverage? Absolutely not! Pioneer has used foresight and innovation to develop a system with the potential technically at least, to overshadow 3DO s presentation power though the latter retains a processing edge

That said why haven't we heard more about LaserActive up to this point? The answer which wil be examined in detail here, nvolves a disturbing lack of hindsight by Pioneer.

Pyramid Patrol, the pack-in game for the system, shows off some its power.

Two clues may be sufficient for some to see where this is going: NEC's TurboGrafx 16 and the Neo•Geo

Before diving headlong into that morass, let us see exactly what the LaserActive system is, and what benefits it provides

First, the technology: CD-ROM and CD-I digitally store the application program plus images, sound and other data within a 540 MB area. LaserActive has the same size digital area, but for full size laser disks, it also has a separate 60 minute analog image and FM sound storage area. The significance of this is that it frees up the entire 540 MB digital area for the interactive application program.

As an example, CD-I has the capacity to store 7,000 still pictures without audio or program code co-residing on the medium. Naturally, when these are added, the number of images goes way down A LaserActive disk can store 108,000 stills in conjunction with 60 minutes of FM audio without touching the 540 MB program area.

LaserActive uses an MPEG-1 video standard, the same as 3DO, which is theoretically capable of reproducing moving pictures and associated audio at a data transfer rate of 1 5 MegaBits per second. The bottleneck lies not in the compression standard but in the way optical media retrieve data as compared to conventional magnetic media

The most recent initiative to partially eradicate that bottleneck has been the invention of the double speed drive, like the one employed by Panasonic s 3DO player This doubles actual data transfer rate from 150 kilobytes a second to 300 KB/Sec. In contrast, Pioneer's drive spins at four times the normal speed quadrupling the data throughput. This enhanced data rate allows more rapid retrieval of images and files from the disk, as well as support for compressed digital video schemes that require higher Bit rates than the normal CD

The only immediate shortfal encountered in comparing the technology of LaserActive to 3DO is that Pioneer's unit lacks indigenous animation processors. This is of more importance to developers than consumers, however as the latter will judge the system solely on the quality of software that supports it.

Pioneer's LaserActive system consists of a main unit which if purchased exclusive of the other control packs, is only capable of playing traditional laser and compact disk products Translate this as movies and music, no games.

The three "optional" control packs are really not optional at al for this audience The first of these the Mega-LD pack, developed in conjunction with SEGA Enterprises, allows play of 8- and 12-inch LaserActive Mega-LD disks, SEGA CDs, Genesis cartridges and standard CD+G discs. This unit comes packaged with Pyramid Patrol reviewed in

A fully tricked out system can play everything but computer CD-ROMs, but the $2500.00 price tag on such a system will be prohibitive to the vast majority of players.

this issue) and Sega's four in one CD· **Streets of Rage Revenge of Shinobi Columas** and **Golden Axe**

The LD-ROM^2 pack, developed n conjunction with NEC Home Electronics plays 8- and 12-inch LaserActive LD-ROM2 discs Duo Soft CD-ROM discs Duo Game cards and CD+G discs The unit comes with an educational game called **Econosaurus** and a TTI game bundle CD including: **Gates of Thunder Bonk's Adventure Bonk's Revenge** and **Bomberman**.

The Laser Karaoke pack comes with a microphone and is compatible with over 200 titles For those unfami iar with karaoke applications they are essentially instrumental music videos with the words overlaid on the bottom of the screen to allow users to sing along.

The base design allows one of the control packs at a time to slide into the front of the player and connect flush to the face For players of multiple systems who possess the buying power this could mean the end of the cable crunch that clutters an otherwise tidy fam ly room.

Convenience alone won't justify the asking price for most players however Also furthering the proliferation of non-compatible video formats via two additions *vice* one each of which requires a separate control module, is certainly not a service to consumers or retailers

Granted a fu ly tricked out system can play everything but computer CD-ROMs but the $2500 00 price tag on such a system wi be prohibitive to the vast majority of players NEC s pack must be disregarded due to an appal ng lack of new software for the Duo Soft and the fact that Pioneer currently doesn't plan to develop an authoring system for th rd party LD-ROM^2 development. Removing that from the cost analysis as wel as the laser karaoke pack only because it is a non-gaming peripheral the system sti costs n excess of $1500 00 A Sega Mega-CD costs a third of that and provides al the same features except the abi ity to play movies and the Mega LD format. Focusing on gaming alone wi the Mega LD format prove resi ient enough to withstand such a cost differential? The currently available title **Pyramid Patrol** from Taito is an excellent game but it isn't worth dropping a grand to play

Strike one· ke the Neo•Geo Pioneer could be pricing themselves out of the market. Its counter to that contention is that the LaserActive is much more than a game system and that is true, but consumers who care nothing about the games have less costly alternatives for the other features both within and outside the Pioneer product ine

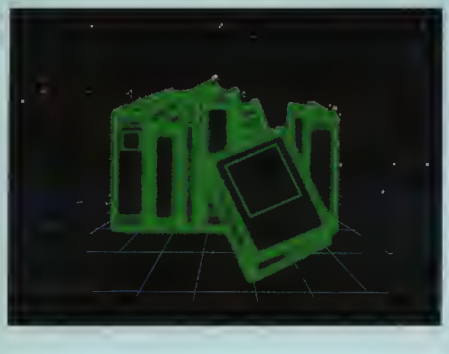
Four more dedicated games are slated prior to Christmas two for each format. Assuming that one only has the resources to buy one of the game packs this means three total games for system rol out and the first major buying season The Mega LD titles are **Space Berserker** a space combat opus and **High Roller** an air combat game using ive footage The LD-ROM^2 titles are **Vajra** a flying first-person shooter with a fantasy theme and **Manhattan Requiem**, in which the player assumes the role of a private detective solving various mysteries filmed on location

Sight unseen these titles wi have to be very strong to carry sales through the turbulent first year

Potential strike two ike NEC Pioneer has not ned up sufficient third party developers to ensure even short term let alone long term survival Pioneer is actively working to rectify that situation It is currently in discussion with over 50 soft ware publishers but, to date only a few of these have entered formal negotiations.

Whether strike three is called or not rests squarely in the hands of the buying public. The Pioneer LaserActive system is an impressive use of innovative technology but, unless the price point drops and software sales soar which would attract more developers don't expect to see it next Christmas.

Ed Dille



LORE

Compute's Sega CD Sourcebook

Jason R. Rich, Compute Books, 256 pages (softbound, $12.95)

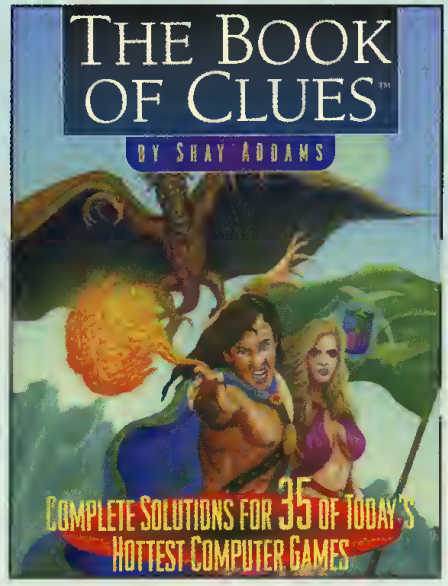
Sega stepped boldly into the multimedia revolution just over a year ago when it introduced its original CD video game accessory. Only a few games were then available; it was not until late in '93 that any quantity of titles began to show up, along with a redesigned version of the Sega CD. This book will introduce potential buyers to the system, and help current owners know a little more about it and some of the games available for it.

The first chapter covers the history of the Sega leading to the CD, and explains the use of the book. The second takes the reader behind the scenes for a glimpse at the programmers, musicians, techies and suits who put the products together. Game coverage follows.

The **Sega CD Sourcebook** is mainly a hint book for 24 of the Sega CD titles available, and as such Rich's work meets or betters the standard for this company's line. There isn't room for step-by-step walkthroughs, but for most games the narrative does explain immediate and long-term goals or the general sequence of events and describes the uses of weapons and other objects. "Gamer's Tips" emphasize things to watch out for and, occasionally, provide button combinations and other codes for special effects or modes of play. Introductory and concluding paragraphs offer background and comments on the game.

Covered are: **The Adventures of Willy Beamish**; **After Burner II**; **Batman Returns**; **Black Hole Assault**; **Chuck Rock**; **Cobra Command**; **Ecco the Dolphin**; **Final Fight**; **Hook**; **Jaguar XJ220**; **Jurassic Park**; **Night Trap**; **Prince of Persia**; **Road Avenger**; **The Secret of Monkey Island**; **Sewer Shark**; **Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective, Vol. II** **Sol-Feace**; **The Amazing Spider-Man vs. the Kingpin**, **Time Gal**; **Wolfchild**, **Wonder Dog** and four **Make My Video** plus **Make Your Own Music Video** titles.

In addition to these run-throughs, there is a chapter of previews. Many of the games will be out by the time this sees print, including **Lethal Enforcers**, **Mortal Kombat**, **Cool Spot** and **Star Trek: the Next Generation**.



Quest Busters: The Book of Clues offers helpful hints on your favorite titles.

A final chapter describes some of the accessories available for the Sega CD, primarily controllers and joysticks. All together, the book should be a welcome addition to the game book library for Sega CD owners.

— Ross Chamberlain

Quest Busters: The Book of Clues

Shay Addams, Clue Books Express, 203 pages (softbound, $18.95)

With software publishers producing single title hint books at 10 to 20 dollars apiece compendiums that deal with multiple games are always welcome Unfortunately, most such books feature a smattering of new titles among a glut of older products whose solutions have already reached print elsewhere.

Not so with this first offering from a fledgling publishing house. **The Book of Clues** is timely and fresh, offering succinct solutions to some of the hottest new computer adventures. Further, it avoids the fillers and fluff that usually adorn titles in this genré.

Addams brings ten years' experience to the venture, having written a dozen books for publishers like Origin Systems, Simon & Schuster and McGraw-Hill. Further, he originated Quest Busters, the largest single group of adventure game fans currently active. Within that group is a dedicated core of professionals who tackle each new product with a relish that borders on fanaticism. Their efforts are regularly recorded in his monthly newsletter, and he gratefully acknowledges the assistance of many of these players in the production of this first installment in a proposed series.

The Book of Clues contains 35 solutions arranged alphabetically from **Alone in the Dark** to **Zork Zero**. Each solution is only a few pages long and generally consists of segmented text to allow the reader to jump directly to the necessary information. Maps are used only when text explanations of required actions are difficult or confusing. Thus the book may have less visual appeal than similar titles, but in return it delivers twice the impact. The intent is not to draw readers into the book but to get them back to playing the game as quickly as possible.

The Book of Clues successfully provides an invaluable reference work for beleaguered adventurers. Purchasers can send in a coupon for a free solution to another game of their choice, or two solutions if they also join Quest Busters at the same time. Also, Addams has kindly offered **EG** readers a reduced price of $15.00 if they mention the magazine when ordering direct at (602) 743-3709

— Ed Dille

Gaming On-Line

Periodically, a single service will have so much developing news of interest to gamers that we eschew the traditional format of this column to provide exclusive coverage This month, the Genie network met the criteria. For additional coverage of MPGs, see Russ Ceccola's feature on TSN in this issue.

Continuing their bid to usurp The Sierra Network as the top grossing U.S. entertainment BBS, the Genie network has just announced several dramatic developments. Topping the list is the pending arrival of online multi-player **Harpoon**. Faithful to Larry Bond's original concept, this graphic based engine is being developed by Kesmai (see inset photo). Beta testing will have commenced when this appears and prospective naval commanders can expect a full blown war at sea shortly into the new year.

RPG players can rejoice at the arrival of **MPG Traveller**. Unlike Paragon's efforts to bring this venerable science fiction classic to the computer screen (which had players controlling groups of characters in a structured plot line), this version promises a gaming experience more faithful to the original. Teams will be formed from individual player characters and missions determined by the computer DM. This allows for greater player interaction on a given mission as well as limitless growth as a prominent member of the entire Genie galaxy of Traveller players. **MPG Traveller** will enter Beta test in December.

The year 1994 promises to be exciting for subscribers, as six major new MPGs will appear in addition to those discussed so far Because of pending contract negotiations, the details of these titles cannot be discussed at this point, but stay tuned to this column for more details as they become available

The first multi-national **Air Warrior** tournament mentioned here in a prior installment has officially been slated to begin in January Teams from the U.S. U K. and Japan will compete in real time for top honors and bragging rights. All pilot slots have been filled for the first outing, but teams are still looking for gunners and crew members. These slots will also probably go quickly so don't dilly-dally: get online now and sign up.

Cyber Strike has rapidly established itself as a mainstay on Genie, but a potential new addition to that game could drive usage through the roof. Simutronics has developed a set of VR goggles that translate head movements to full range horizontal and vertical motion in the 3-D **Cyber Strike** environment. More importantly, these units only weigh two and a half ounces, which is comparable to a pair of sunglasses. Initially, the units will be offered only through the Genie service, though broader marketing and applications are possible in the near future. Pricing was not available at press time.

Other items of interest for Genie addicts include the addition of graphic support to the **Hundred Years War**, specifically a 256 color point and click map interface that eliminates the need for cumbersome paper copies. A new graphic front end has also been added to **Galactic Emperor** plus fans of that title will probably enjoy another upcoming title of similar subject matter As yet unnamed this space opera has been designed by Marc Jacobs, designer of **Dragon's Gate**, and features space-based Quick Time movie sequences.

Genie has plans to expand its modem to modem arena as well. This move was undertaken to support a vocal and growing group of players who prefer head-to-head contests over multi-player interactivity.

As a reflection of technical proliferation and increased complexity among peripherals, Genie has opened several new online support groups for game players. The first of these, the sound support forum, will maintain a full library of drivers and tech support guides for major and minor boards. Users may download whatever they need to configure their system as well as post any difficulties experienced for a timely response from the tech wizards. A similar forum is now set up for CD-ROM users who experience an inordinate amount of frustration and confusion with memory use, inadequate drivers and other complications that plague this growing medium.

Finally, to stay on the cutting edge of gaming support, Genie is opening the first ever 3DO users group. As the number of titles available for the system expands exponentially over the next few months, usage of this service is expected to soar. Count on Genie to stay on top of the latest developments in the industry and count on this column to report them.

— Ed Dille

Coming Attractions...

In the February Edition of Electronic Games

The Best Games of 1993

Our editors present their choices for the outstanding video, computer, multimedia, portable and coin-op games—and then it's up to the readers to pick the ultimate winners!

Sonic III!

The latest sequel to the game that sold the Genesis is still in development, but EG brings you first word about this cartridge's look and feel. We'll show you the hot graphics, fresh play-action and major new character.

The Players' Guide to Fantasy Gaming

With a crystal ball in one hand and a magic divining wand in the other, we penetrate the mysteries of video, computer and multimedia fantasy games. Find out about today's hottest adventures and action contests—and preview the major titles coming soon!

And Be Sure to Look For the Very Latest in High-End Gaming, Including:

- Power On!
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- Software Gallery
- CD Gallery
- Portable Playtime
- The Jury
- Playing It Smart
- Gaming On-Line
- Lore

and don't forget all the latest news and previews in **EG's Hotline!**

Look For All This and Much More At Newsstands January 20, 1993!

LET EG KNOW WHAT YOUR FAVORITE GAMES ARE!

We want to know what you're playing, and to receive your vote for the most popular game programs each month. Fill out your choices below, then send your poll sheet (or a photocopy if you prefer) to:
Electronic Games Reader Poll, 330 S. Decatur, Ste. 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107

My favorite video games are:
1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite computer games are:
1._____
2._____
3._____

My favorite multimedia game is:
1._____

My favorite coin-op game is:
1._____

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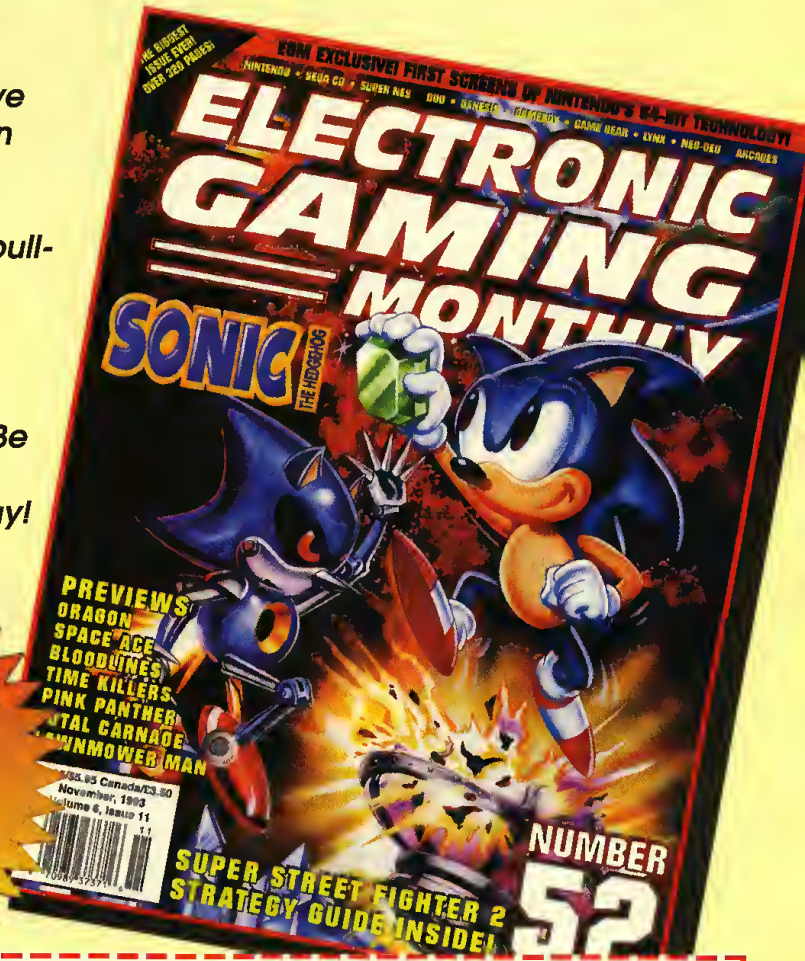

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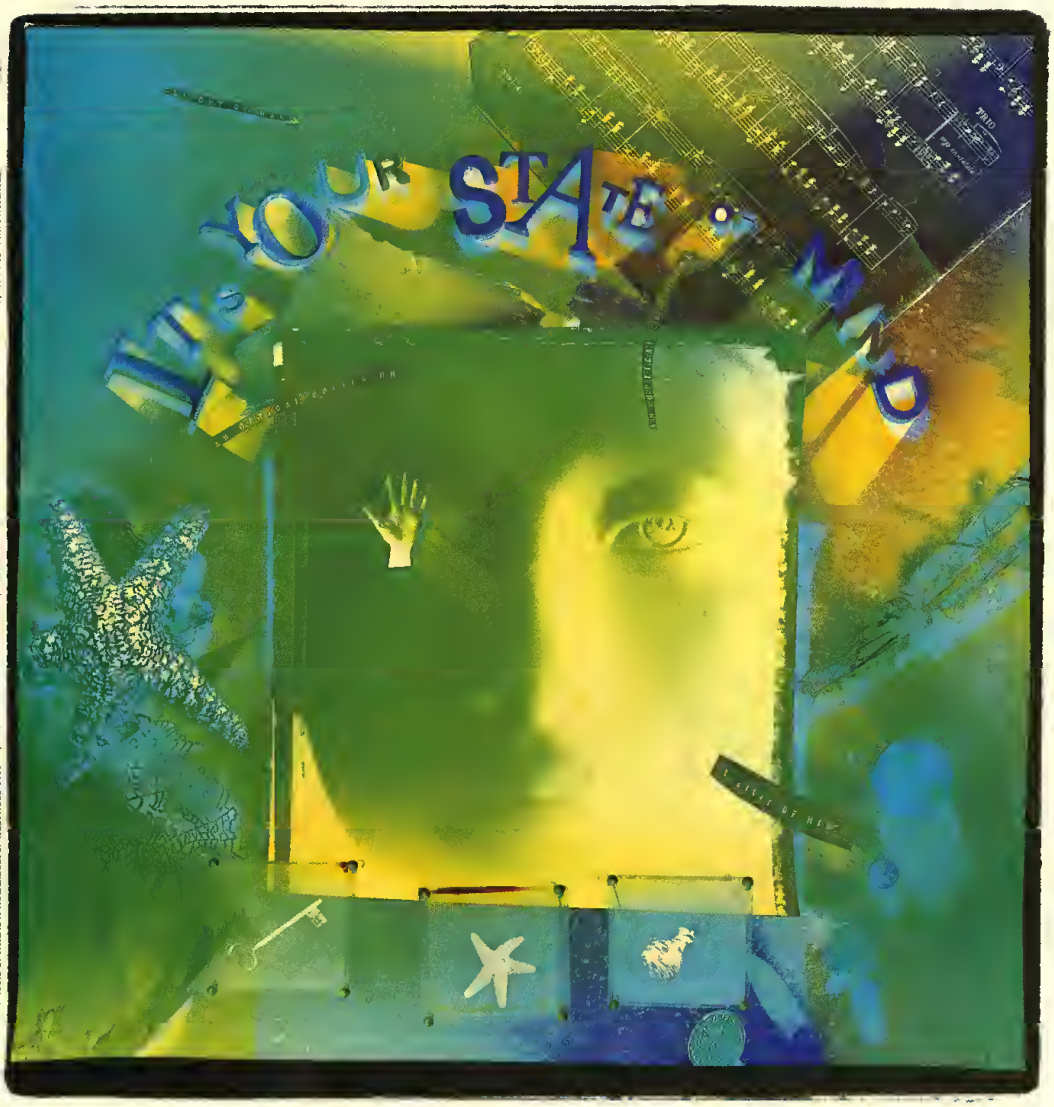

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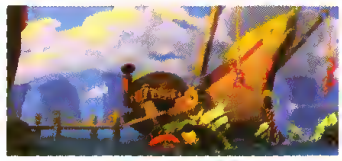

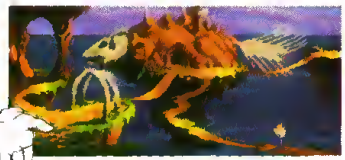

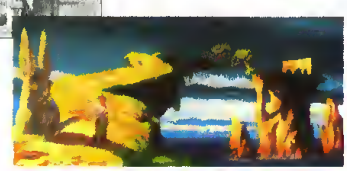

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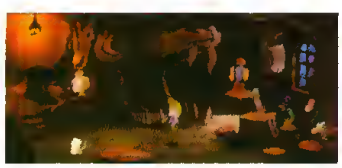

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